



*part two : take to heart*

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# Into the Promise - Take to Heart

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As we progress on The Journey through the Bible, we now enter the section of Scripture known as the Prophets. Prophets were those that God used to send messages to His people. These books cover a period of time from the kingdom of Israel through the exile. The final 17 books of the Old Testament are written by the prophet who bears the name: five major prophets and 12 minor prophets, designated as such by their length. These books are not in historical order.

These prophets were sent by God with various assignments, each warning the people of God that their disobedience would have consequences, but also to share hope that God would not abandon them, but would send One to redeem them. The Old Testament ends with the mysterious phrase in this last Book of Malachi:

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. And He will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”

Malachi 4:5-6

This is a confusing, cryptic and disturbing statement to conclude the Old Testament Scriptures. This is not the way you would want to finish a book . . . unless you were planning to write a sequel.

**OUR PRAYER IS THAT AS YOU READ THROUGH THE PROPHETS, YOU WILL TAKE TO HEART GOD’S LOVE FOR YOU, AND THAT HIS WARNINGS, AS WELL AS HIS ASSURANCES, ARE GIVEN TO DIRECT YOU INTO THE HOPE THAT HE PROVIDES.**

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.

***Find all of the resources at [gracespringchurch.org/thejourney](https://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!***



# 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*

READ SCRIPTURE SERIES

*by Tim Mackie*

THE REAL GOD

*by Chip Ingram*

THRIVING IN BABYLON

*by Larry Osborne*

THE GOOD BOOK

*by Daron Spoo and  
Kyle Idleman*

DEFEATING REPETITIVE SIN

*by Vince Miller*



## 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*

WINNING THE WAR IN YOUR MIND

*by Craig Groeschel*

NOT GOD ENOUGH


*by J.D. Greear*



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# POTENTIAL PATHS THROUGH THE BIBLE

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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! Below are several different methods for reading through the entire Bible in a year. Maybe you have tried before and 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 the end of this section. We will release the next Growth Guide with continued plans a week prior to the next section to help you continue your journey through scripture.



# STRAIGHT THROUGH THE BIBLE

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<i>6/14 Psalms 36-37</i>	<i>7/19 Psalms 124-131</i>
<i>6/15 Psalms 38-39</i>	<i>7/20 Psalms 132-134</i>
<i>6/16 Psalms 40-42</i>	<i>7/21 Psalms 135-137</i>
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<i>6/18 Psalms 45-47</i>	<i>7/23 Psalms 141-144</i>
<i>6/19 Psalms 48-49</i>	<i>7/24 Psalms 145-147</i>
<i>6/20 Psalms 50-54</i>	<i>7/25 Psalms 148-150; Proverbs 1</i>
<i>6/21 Psalms 55-56</i>	<i>7/26 Proverbs 2-4</i>
<i>6/22 Psalms 57-60</i>	<i>7/27 Proverbs 5-7</i>
<i>6/23 Psalms 61-67</i>	<i>7/28 Proverbs 8-10</i>
<i>6/24 Psalms 68-69</i>	<i>7/29 Proverbs 11-12</i>
<i>6/25 Psalms 70-71</i>	<i>7/30 Proverbs 13-16</i>
<i>6/26 Psalms 72-71</i>	<i>7/31 Proverbs 17-20</i>
<i>6/27 Psalms 73-74</i>	<i>8/1 Proverbs 21-23</i>
<i>6/28 Psalms 75-76</i>	<i>8/2 Proverbs 24-26</i>
<i>6/29 Psalm 77</i>	<i>8/3 Proverbs 27-30</i>
<i>6/30 Psalm 78</i>	<i>8/4 Proverbs 31; Ecclesiastes 1-2</i>
<i>7/1 Psalms 79-82</i>	<i>8/5 Ecclesiastes 3-8</i>
<i>7/2 Psalms 83-86</i>	<i>8/6 Ecclesiastes 9-12; Song of Solomon 1-2</i>
<i>7/3 Psalms 87-88</i>	<i>8/7 Song of Solomon 3-8</i>
<i>7/4 Psalms 89-90</i>	<i>8/8 Isaiah 1</i>
<i>7/5 Psalms 91-93</i>	
<i>7/6 Psalms 94-97</i>	
<i>7/7 Psalms 98-101</i>	
<i>7/8 Psalms 102-103</i>	
<i>7/9 Psalms 104-105</i>	
<i>7/10 Psalm 106</i>	
<i>7/11 Psalm 107</i>	
<i>7/12 Psalms 108-109</i>	
<i>7/13 Psalms 110-113</i>	
<i>7/14 Psalms 114-117</i>	
<i>7/15 Psalms 118-119:40</i>	
<i>7/16 Psalm 119:41-96</i>	
<i>7/17 Psalm 119:97-160</i>	
<i>7/18 Psalm 119:161 - Psalm 123</i>	

# DAILY READINGS IN 4 DIFFERENT THEMES

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6/14 Deuteronomy 15:19-16:17, Proverbs 9, Hosea 14, Philemon 1:8-22  
6/15 Deuteronomy 16:18-17:20, Proverbs 10, Amos 1, Philemon 1:23-25  
6/16 Deuteronomy 18, Proverbs 11-12, Amos 2, Matthew 1:1-17  
6/17 Deuteronomy 19, Proverbs 13-14, Amos 3, Matthew 1:18-2:12  
6/18 Deuteronomy 20, Proverbs 15-16, Amos 4, Matthew 2:13-23  
6/19 Deuteronomy 21:1-22:12, Proverbs 17-18, Amos 5, Matthew 3  
6/20 Deuteronomy 22:13-30, Proverbs 19-20, Amos 6, Matthew 4:1-11  
6/21 Deuteronomy 23:1-14, Proverbs 21-22, Amos 7-8, Matthew 4:12-25  
6/22 Deuteronomy 23:15-25:19, Proverbs 23-24, Amos 9, Matthew 5:1-16  
6/23 Deuteronomy 26, Proverbs 25-26, Micah 1-2, Matthew 5:17-48  
6/24 Deuteronomy 27, Proverbs 27-28, Micah 3, Matthew 6:1-18  
6/25 Deuteronomy 28:1-14, Proverbs 29, Micah 4, Matthew 6:19-24  
6/26 Deuteronomy 28:15-68, Proverbs 30, Micah 5, Matthew 6:25-34  
6/27 Deuteronomy 29:1-30:10, Proverbs 31, Micah 6, Matthew 7:1-12  
6/28 Deuteronomy 30:11-20, Ecclesiastes 1:1-3, Micah 7:1-13, Matthew 7:13-29  
6/29 Deuteronomy 31:1-29, Ecclesiastes 1:4-11, Micah 7:14-20, Matthew 8  
6/30 Deuteronomy 31:30-32:47, Ecclesiastes 1:12-18, Nahum 1, Matthew 9  
7/1 Deuteronomy 32:48-33:29, Ecclesiastes 2:1-11, Nahum 2, Matthew 10  
7/2 Deuteronomy 34, Ecclesiastes 2:12-17, Nahum 3, Matthew 11  
7/3 Joshua 1, Ecclesiastes 2:18-23, Zephaniah 1, Matthew 12  
7/4 Joshua 2, Ecclesiastes 2:24-26, Zephaniah 2, Matthew 13  
7/5 Joshua 3, Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, Zephaniah 3:1-8, Matthew 14  
7/6 Joshua 4, Ecclesiastes 3:9-22, Zephaniah 3:9-20, Matthew 15  
7/7 Joshua 5, Ecclesiastes 4, Jeremiah 1:1-10, Matthew 16  
7/8 Joshua 6, Ecclesiastes 5:1-7, Jeremiah 1:11-19, Matthew 17  
7/9 Joshua 7, Ecclesiastes 5:8-17, Jeremiah 2:1-3:5, Matthew 18  
7/10 Joshua 8, Ecclesiastes 5:18-20, Jeremiah 3:6-4:4, Matthew 19:1-20:16  
7/11 Joshua 9, Ecclesiastes 6, Jeremiah 4:5-31, Matthew 20:17-21:11  
7/12 Joshua 10, Ecclesiastes 7:1-14, Jeremiah 5, Matthew 21:12-27  
7/13 Joshua 11-12, Ecclesiastes 7:15-29, Jeremiah 6, Matthew 21:28-22:14  
7/14 Joshua 13-14, Ecclesiastes 8, Jeremiah 7:1-8:3, Matthew 22:15-46  
7/15 Joshua 15, Ecclesiastes 9:1-10, Jeremiah 8:4-9:22, Matthew 23  
7/16 Joshua 16-17, Ecclesiastes 9:11-18, Jeremiah 9:23-10:25, Matthew 24  
7/17 Joshua 18-19, Ecclesiastes 10, Jeremiah 11:1-17, Matthew 25  
7/18 Joshua 20, Ecclesiastes 11:1-8, Jeremiah 11:18-12:17, Matthew 26:1-29

PENTATEUCH/HISTORY

PSALMS/WISDOM

CHRONICLES/PROPHETS

GOSPELS/EPISTLES

## DAILY READINGS IN 4 DIFFERENT THEMES CONTINUED

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7/19 Joshua 21, Ecclesiastes 11:9-12:8, Jeremiah 13, Matthew 26:30-75  
7/20 Joshua 22, Ecclesiastes 12:9-14, Jeremiah 14:1-15:9, Matthew 27:1-26  
7/21 Joshua 23-24, Song of Solomon 1:1-8, Jeremiah 16:10-16:21, Matthew 27:27-66  
7/22 Judges 1, Song of Solomon 1:9-2:7, Jeremiah 17, Matthew 28  
7/23 Judges 2:1-3:6, Song of Solomon 2:8-17, Jeremiah 18, Hebrews 1  
7/24 Judges 3:7-31, Song of Solomon 3, Jeremiah 19, Hebrews 2  
7/25 Judges 4, Song of Solomon 4:1-8, Jeremiah 20, Hebrews 3:1-6  
7/26 Judges 5, Song of Solomon 4:9-16, Jeremiah 21, Hebrews 3:7-4:13  
7/27 Judges 6, Song of Solomon 5:1-9, Jeremiah 22:1-23:8, Hebrews 4:14-5:10  
7/28 Judges 7, Song of Solomon 5:10-6:3, Jeremiah 23:9-40, Hebrews 5:11-6:20  
7/29 Judges 8, Song of Solomon 6:4-12, Jeremiah 24, Hebrews 7  
7/30 Judges 9, Song of Solomon 6:13-7:9, Jeremiah 25:1-14, Hebrews 8:1-9:10  
7/31 Judges 10, Song of Solomon 7:10-13, Jeremiah 25:15-38, Hebrews 9:11-10:18  
8/1 Judges 11, Song of Solomon 8:1-7, Jeremiah 26, Hebrews 10:19-39  
8/2 Judges 12, Song of Solomon 8:8-14, Jeremiah 27-28, Hebrews 11:1-12:2  
8/3 Judges 13, Psalm 1, Jeremiah 29, Hebrews 12:3-29  
8/4 Judges 14, Psalm 2, Jeremiah 30, Hebrews 13:1-19  
8/5 Judges 15, Psalm 3, Jeremiah 31, Hebrews 13:20-25  
8/6 Judges 16, Psalm 4, Jeremiah 32, Mark 1  
8/7 Judges 17, Psalm 5, Jeremiah 33, Mark 2-3  
8/8 Judges 18, Psalm 6, Jeremiah 34, Mark 4:1-34

# CHRONOLOGICALLY THROUGH THE BIBLE

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6/14 2 Chronicles 6-7, Psalm 136	7/17 Isaiah 18-22
6/15 Psalms 134, 146-150	7/18 Isaiah 23-27
6/16 1 Kings 9, 2 Chronicles 8	7/19 2 Kings 18:1-8, 2 Chronicles 29-31, Psalm 48
6/17 Proverbs 25-26	7/20 Hosea 1-7
6/18 Proverbs 27-29	7/21 Hosea 8-14
6/19 Ecclesiastes 1-6	7/22 Isaiah 28-30
6/20 Ecclesiastes 7-12	7/23 Isaiah 31-34
6/21 1 Kings 10-11, 2 Chronicles 9	7/24 Isaiah 35-36
6/22 Proverbs 30-31	7/25 Isaiah 37-39, Psalm 76
6/23 1 Kings 12-14	7/26 Isaiah 40-43
6/24 2 Chronicles 10-12	7/27 Isaiah 44-48
6/25 1 Kings 15:1-23, 2 Chronicles 13-16	7/28 2 Kings 18:9-19:37, Psalms 46, 80, 135
6/26 1 Kings 15:25-16:34, 2 Chronicles 17	7/29 Isaiah 49-53
6/27 1 Kings 17-19	7/30 Isaiah 53-58
6/28 1 Kings 20-21	7/31 Isaiah 59-63
6/29 1 Kings 22, 2 Chronicles 18	8/1 Isaiah 64-66
6/30 2 Chronicles 19-23	8/2 2 Kings 20-21
7/1 Obadiah 1, Psalms 82-83	8/3 2 Chronicles 32-33
7/2 2 Kings 1-4	8/4 Nahum 1-3
7/3 2 Kings 5-8	8/5 2 Kings 22-23, 2 Chronicles 34-35
7/4 2 Kings 9-11	8/6 Zephaniah 1-3
7/5 2 Kings 12-13, 2 Chronicles 24	8/7 Jeremiah 1-3
7/6 2 Kings 14, 2 Chronicles 25	8/8 Jeremiah 4-6
7/7 Jonah 1-4	
7/8 2 Kings 15, 2 Chronicles 26	
7/9 Isaiah 1-4	
7/10 Isaiah 5-8	
7/11 Amos 1-5	
7/12 Amos 6-9	
7/13 2 Chronicle 27, Isaiah 9-12	
7/14 Micah 1-7	
7/15 2 Chronicles 28, 2 Kings 16-17	
7/16 Isaiah 13-17	

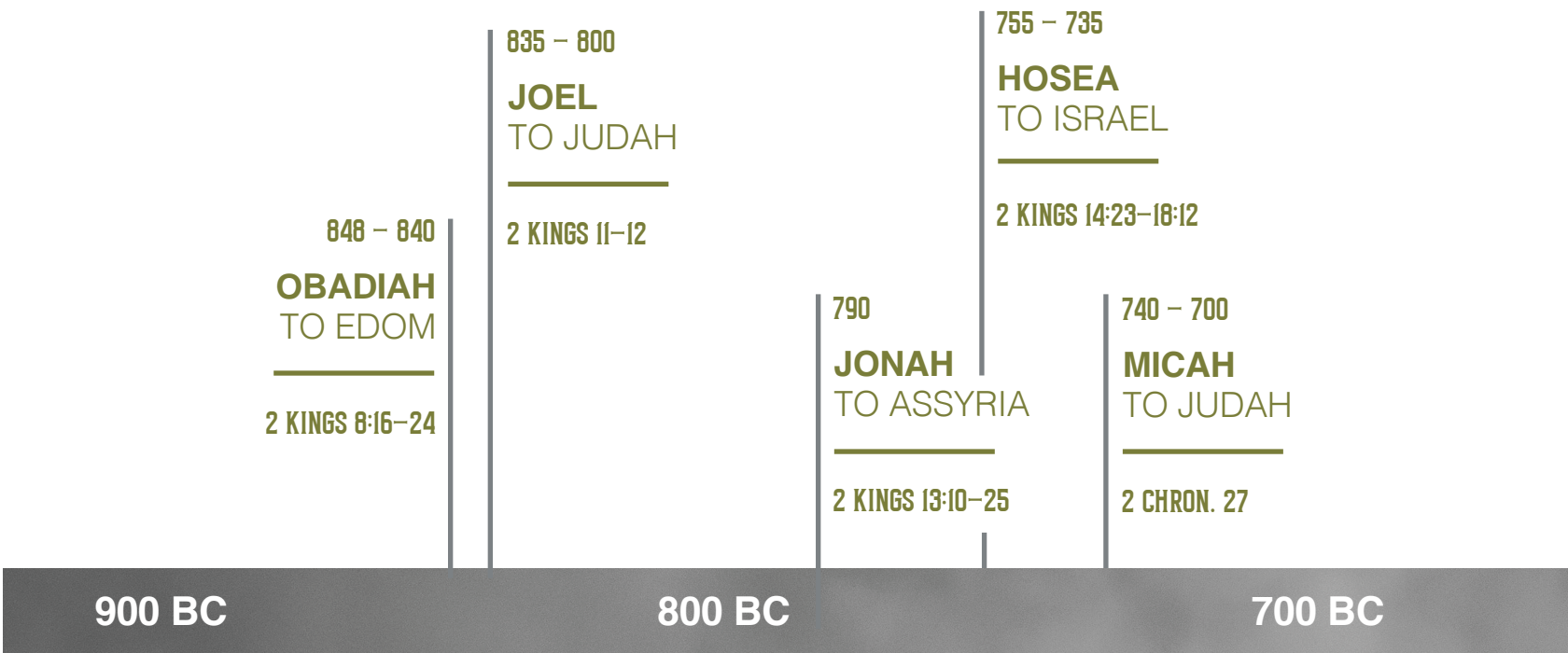


And we have the  
prophetic word more  
fully confirmed, to  
which you will do well  
to pay attention as to a  
lamp shining in a dark  
place, until the day  
dawns and the morning  
star rises in your hearts.  
2 Peter 1:19



# Prophetic Books

## TIMELINE & HELP SHEET



### KEY:

PRE-EXILIC PROPHETS

EXILIC PROPHETS

POST-EXILIC PROPHETS

767 – 743

**AMOS**  
TO ISRAEL

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2 KINGS 14:23–15:7

722

*ISRAEL  
EXILED TO  
ASSYRIA*

745 – 685

**ISAIAH**  
TO JUDAH

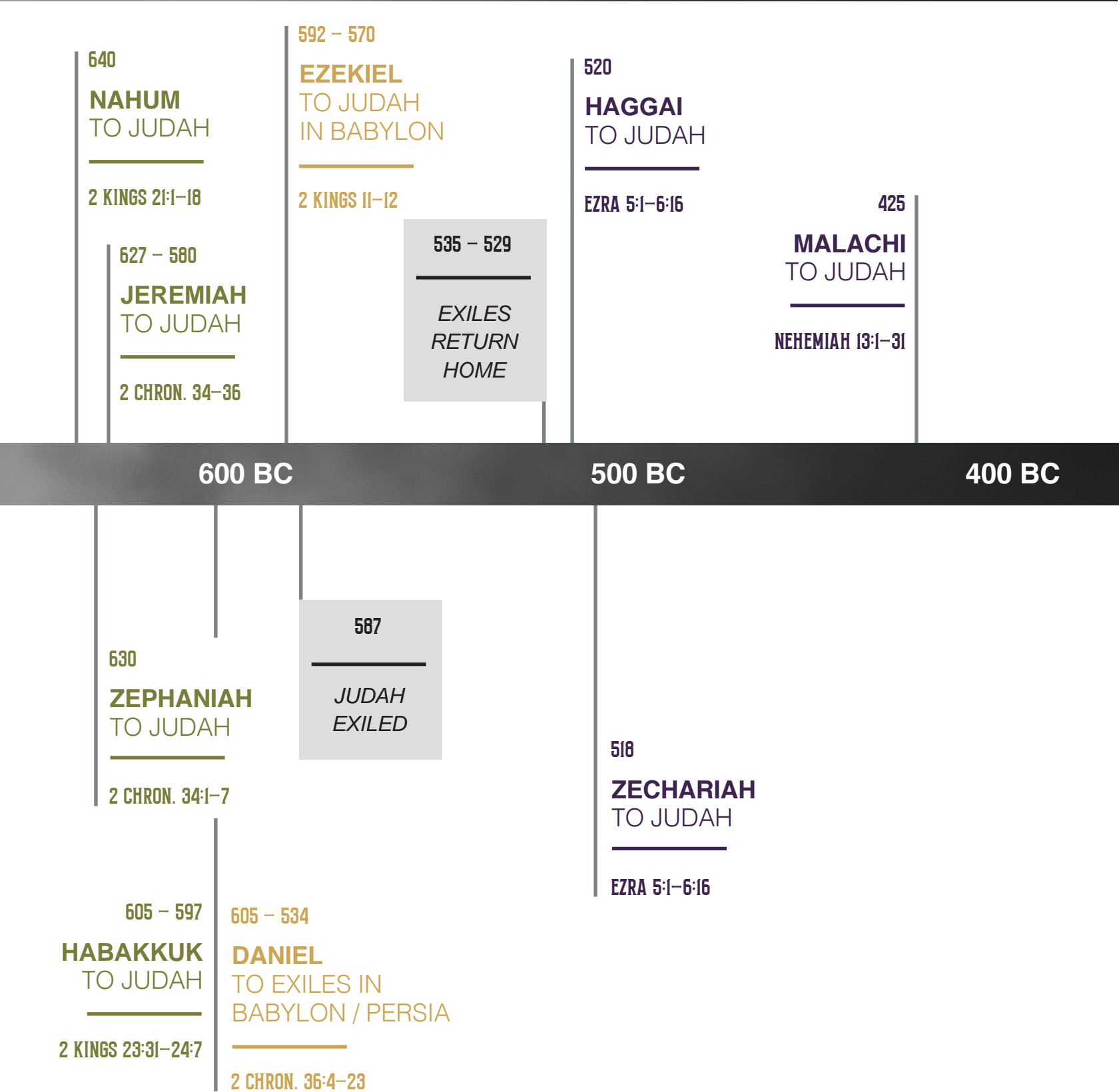
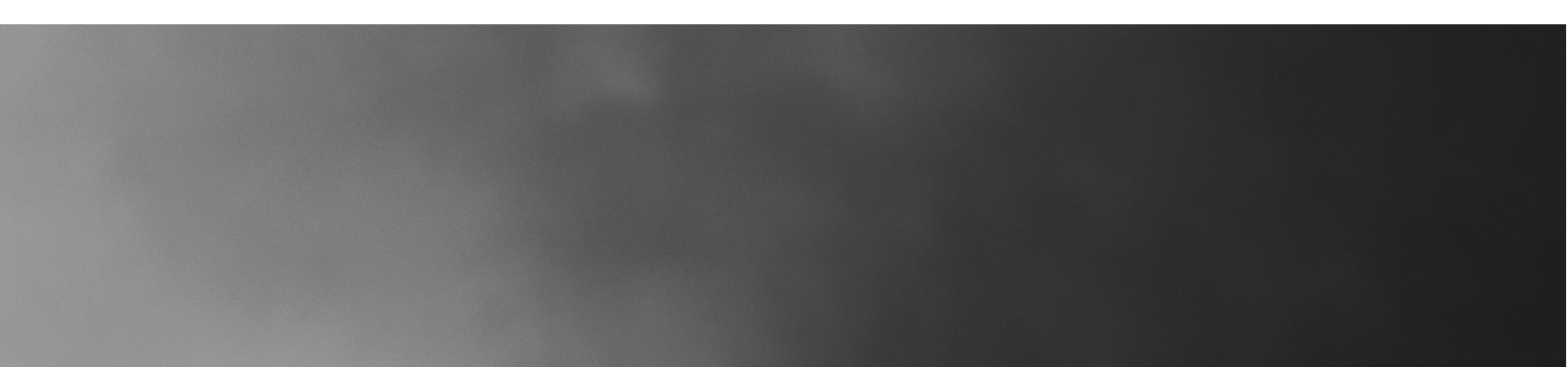
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2 CHRON. 26:26–32:22

INFORMATION BY

*The Daily Grace Co.*

Equipping Disciples in the Word



# ELIJAH

## THERE IS NO GOD BUT JEHOVAH

**I KINGS 17:1 – 19:18**

**WHEN GOD WANTS TO DO SOMETHING, HE CALLS ON HIS SERVANTS.**

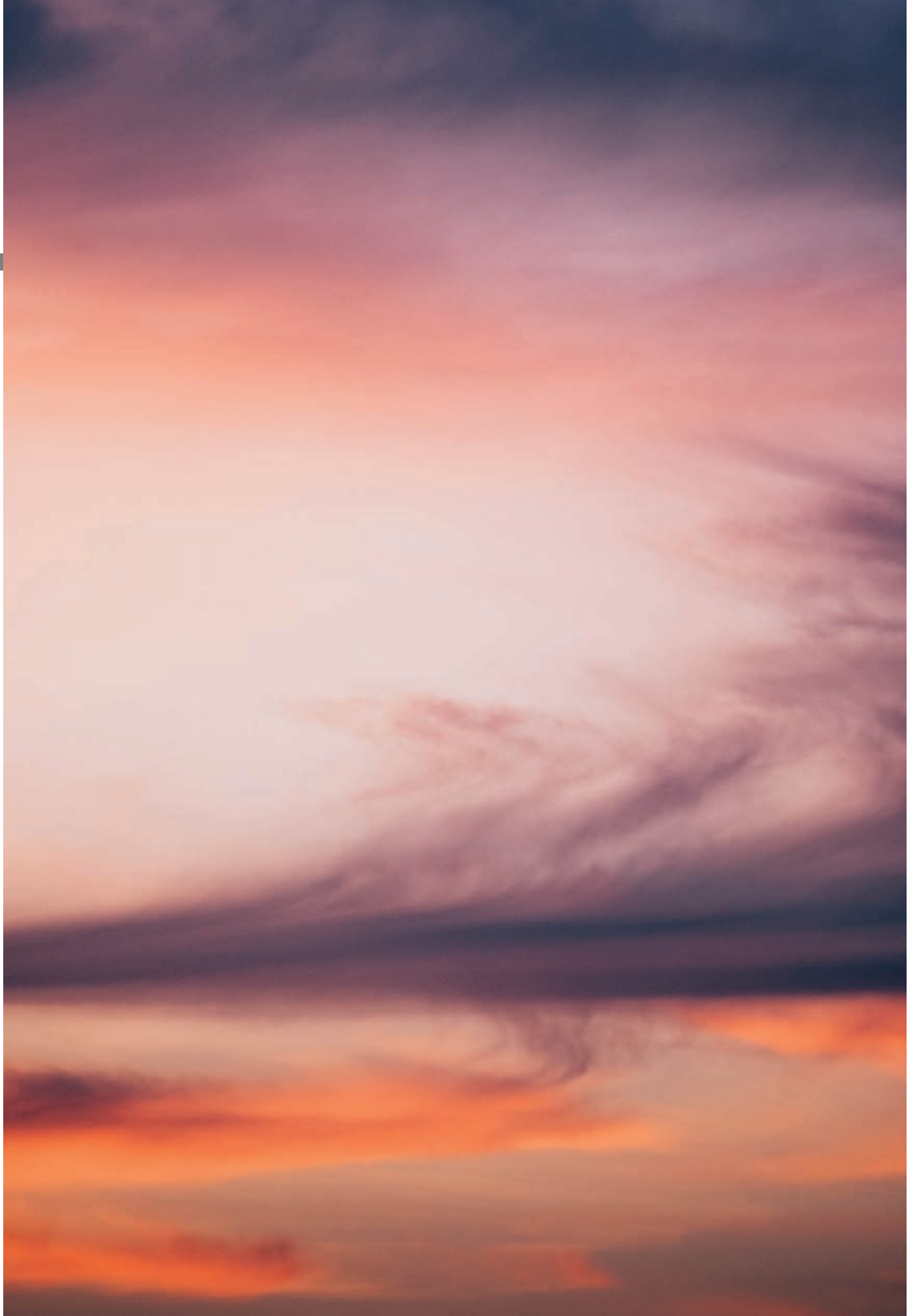
Elijah's life is a story of grand dependence on God. He begins his ministry in solitude, seeking the Lord and learning how to depend on Him alone. The overflow of Him being with God pours out into the lives of those that benefit from the miracles of God through Him. His relationship with God and call as a prophet would eventually lead him to his most famous endeavor - an encounter with the prophets of Baal where God shows up in a massive way and proves that He is the only true God.

One of the most intriguing parts of the story comes after the glory and fire of God consumes the offerings and prophets. Elijah became scared even though God's provision had shown true time and time again. He fled the perceived danger of the threat on his life and found himself alone and depressed in the desert. But God's still, small, reliant voice still showed up to Elijah. Whether you find yourself depending on God for even the small things, seeing His glory on the mountaintop, or searching for His will for your life in the desert, we can be certain that when we turn our attention from the circumstances of life to the giver of life, He is ready and waiting to meet us in the place that we are in.

## PRAYER

This week, keep a prayer journal and write out your thoughts on dependence to God. What does it mean to depend on Him? What are the things that are keeping you from fully depending on Him? Ask Him to illuminate some areas that you can depend on Him more and what the steps might be to trust Him in this part of your journey. Write out which stage of Elijah's journey you relate to the most. What is your prayer in this part of your journey?





## KEY VERSE:

*There is power in the word of God. Sometimes we need to remember who God is and what He has promised in order to step out in obedience. This week, look at the words of Elijah below as he called upon God. Memorize, summarize, or rewrite these words throughout your week as you call on God in the midst of your time with Him.*

**O LORD, GOD OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND  
ISRAEL, LET IT BE KNOWN THIS DAY THAT  
YOU ARE GOD IN ISRAEL, AND THAT I AM  
YOUR SERVANT, AND THAT I HAVE DONE ALL  
THESE THINGS AT YOUR WORD. ANSWER ME,  
O LORD, ANSWER ME, THAT THIS PEOPLE MAY  
KNOW THAT YOU, O LORD, ARE GOD, AND  
THAT YOU HAVE TURNED THEIR HEARTS BACK.**

**1 KINGS 18:36–37**

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*As you continue on your reading plan, take time to write out some of your thoughts each day surrounding the verses you've read using the following questions as guides.*

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Observation - Write down all 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.

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Principles - 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?

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Application - 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?

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**PRACTICING SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES:****SILENCE AND SOLITUDE**

Twice in the narrative of Elijah, we see him in a place of silence and solitude before the Lord. The first time was a time of trusting God's provision. The second was a time of brokenness and questioning. The ancient practices of silence and solitude are vital to the life of a believer, but they're ones that we can tend to forget about.

**SILENCE AND SOLITUDE HELP US TO RECENTER OURSELVES ON WHO GOD IS AND WHAT HE IS DOING IN THE WORLD AROUND US.**

It helps us to focus on being with God rather than doing for God.

Try this exercise this week:

When you start your time with the Lord, take time before anything else to get comfortable and turn off distractions. Remove your phone or anything that would take your attention away from the space you are in. Take time to simply sit in God's presence. Focus on breathing deep and full breaths. Ask God to show Himself to you and to speak to your heart. Try to envision taking each of your own thoughts, putting them into a balloon and releasing them to float away from you. This might be a difficult practice at first and a few minutes might feel like a long time. Try to focus on receiving from the Father and being with Him rather than asking or doing for Him. Do this for five minutes each day before you read from His word. Then ask Him to illuminate what you'll be reading each day.

## BACKGROUND:

Israel had been ruled by three kings (Saul, David and Solomon) for approximately 120 years. After Solomon's death, ten tribes refused to be ruled by his son. Israel split into two nations; the northern country of Israel and the southern country of Judah. The story of Elijah takes place in the northern country during the reign of the seventh king, Ahab. None of the northern kings followed God, but Ahab is considered one of the worst. Elijah was prophet during Ahab's reign.

## BELONG

Name an actor's voice that you recognize when you hear it, even if you can't see them?  
What makes their voice so distinct?

## GROW

### **1 Kings 16:29-33.**

How is Ahab described?

What are some of the things Ahab did that were considered evil?

### **Compare James 5:17 with 1 Kings 17:1.**

What additional details does James 5 give about the drought brought on by Elijah's words?

### **Read 1 Kings 17:17-22.**

How did Elijah respond to the death of the widow's son?

How did God respond to Elijah?

How do you respond to the needs of others?

### **Read 1 Kings 18: 30-39.**

What was the significance of rebuilding the altar in front of everyone?

How does Elijah's prayer (vs. 36-37) show his faith in God?

**Read 1 Kings 19:9-13.**

After God's demonstration of His power on Mt. Carmel, Elijah hides in fear.

Why is he afraid and how does God respond?

What is the significance of the earthquake, the fire, and then the gentle breeze?

How do you recognize when God is speaking directly to you?

## REACH

How have you responded to the weaknesses and needs of others?

What role does prayer and faith play in your response?

Where is God calling you to take a stand in faith?

## JAMES 5:17 1 KINGS 17:1

Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth.

Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word."





# Elisha

## GOD'S WAYS ARE NOT OUR WAYS

2 KINGS 5:1–18

**GOD CAN USE PAIN TO BRING YOU AND OTHERS TO HIMSELF.**

Elisha finds himself in the middle of a story of two people joined together through differing circumstances. Naaman was a great military commander for Syria who was suffering from leprosy. The Syrians had also stolen a girl from Israel into bondage serving Naaman's family. When the girl heard of Naaman's leprosy, she told him about Elisha who was a prophet and performing miracles in the name of God. This set off a course of events that would allow Naaman to be healed and receive the truth of who God is.

Because of this maid's obedience, we see Naaman, who was far from God, turn to the one true and living God after he was healed. When Elisha first told Naaman what he must do to be healed, he scoffed, got angry, and stormed away. ***How could something as simple as dipping in the water seven times heal something as oppressive as leprosy?*** Through his obedience, God washed him clean and healed him. Through the pain of the Israelite girl, she was able to change her circumstances and see her master come to know the Lord. Through the obedience to God's commands, Naaman was not only healed, but entered into relationship with God. When we obey God, we see miracles happen and lives changed around us.

### PRACTICING SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES:

## DEPENDENCE AND OBEDIENCE

The maid and Naaman both walked in obedience in different ways. The maid had been stolen from her people and brought into servitude under Naaman's family. ***She didn't allow this to cause her bitterness or to turn away from the***

## KEY VERSE

*This week, focus on the obedience of Naaman and his response after he was healed. These verses give us a small picture of Naaman's healing and response to God.*

*Take time to meditate on this verse and pray for someone who might come to know God because of your obedience.*

**SO HE WENT DOWN AND DIPPED HIMSELF SEVEN TIMES IN THE JORDAN, ACCORDING TO THE WORD OF THE MAN OF GOD, AND HIS FLESH WAS RESTORED LIKE THE FLESH OF A LITTLE CHILD, AND HE WAS CLEAN. THEN HE RETURNED TO THE MAN OF GOD, HE AND ALL HIS COMPANY, AND HE CAME AND STOOD BEFORE HIM. AND HE SAID, BEHOLD, I KNOW THAT THERE IS NO GOD IN ALL THE EARTH BUT IN ISRAEL.**

2 KINGS 5:14–15

***Lord, but seized the opportunity to present her God to Naaman.*** Naaman looked at the act of dipping in the water as beneath him, but when he submitted to God, he found himself clean and realized God's power. ***We often view our circumstances as hindrances or frustrations instead of opportunities to follow in radical obedience to God.*** What is the thing inside of you that you know God is calling you to do that you've been hesitant about? What does practicing obedience and saying yes to God look like for you this week? Maybe it means depending more on prayer and capturing your thoughts or having hard conversations. Maybe it means just taking the focus off of your circumstance and focusing on the next step that God has for you. Practice this week by depending on Him and stepping where He calls you to.

## PRAYER

Be honest with God this week. Where are you struggling to see His hand moving? What are the burdens that you are carrying? Where do you know that you need to step, but have been hesitant to do so? Ask God to show you where you can follow Him more closely. Ask Him what He would have you do. Write out both the prayers and the answers that you find and meditate on them this week.

[illegible]

**Sins to Avoid**

Make a list of any sins, wrong actions, or attitudes mentioned in this passage. How can you avoid these areas in your life?

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**Promises to Claim**

Make a list of any promises - either stated or inferred in this passage. Which of these promises can you claim this week?

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**Examples to Follow**

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.

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**Commands to Obey**

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.

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**Knowledge of God to Apply**

What does the passage tell you about God that you can apply to your daily life? God's character shines through these passages as an example for you.

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## BACKGROUND

This story takes place when Jehoram (son of Ahab) was the king of the northern kingdom of Israel and Elisha had succeeded Elijah as the prominent prophet of God. Israel was at war with Aram (present day Syria including the city of Damascus). Naaman was a non-Jew and a great military leader for the king of Aram.

## BELONG

Describe a situation where you were afraid to speak up even though you knew you were right?

What task or responsibility do you have that you really dislike?

## GROW

2 Kings 5:1-8 gives the setting of this chapter.

What important details about Namaan do you see in these verses?

What details surprise or confuse you?

Which character(s) do you relate to most and why?

One of the characters is the Jewish slave girl who was in

Namaan's house because she was taken captive during a raid.

What do you think her life had been like to this point?

How does her response to unfair circumstances

differ from ours frequently?

How can we bring honor to God when we are treated unfairly?

2 Kings 5:9-14 describes how Namaan was miraculously healed in a way that was humiliating to him.

What does this tell you about God's character?

Describe a time when your pride got in the way of God working in your life?



Namaan's response to his healing is described in 2 Kings 5:15-16.

How is this second interaction between Elisha and Namaan different from the first?

Why do you think God healed Namaan?

Why is this story recorded in Scripture?

## REACH

In what situation do you need God's help to not focus on yourself but on the needs of others?

How does your pride manifest itself most often?

How is this preventing you from experiencing God's best for you?

## PRIDE

### *NOUN*

A FEELING OF DEEP PLEASURE OR SATISFACTION DERIVED FROM ONE'S OWN ACHIEVEMENTS.

REVELING IN ONE'S OWN GLORY.

## HUMILITY

### *NOUN*

A MODEST OR LOW VIEW OF ONE'S OWN IMPORTANCE.

WILLINGLY SUBMITS HIMSELF TO GOD AND TO OTHERS FOR GOD'S SAKE.

# THE HENNESY'S STORY

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Scan the QR code to watch a video of a gracespring family,

The Hennesys, share on how God brought them through their pain into a place of blessing.

Read the transcript below.

Matt: Hi, my name is Matt Hennessey, this is my wife, Laura, and we've been gracespring family members since 2017.

Laura: So we met at Michigan State University in 1997.

Matt: Really, honestly, from our first conversation, we'd talked about our individual desires to have families. And then, of course, when you get more and more committed in a relationship, those individual desires become mutual desires and you start to envision what it would look like to have a family.

Laura: Fairly early on in our marriage, we discovered that the giant that we were facing was infertility, and we were young 20s so everyone around us, family, siblings, friends, were all getting pregnant and having families. And we were ready, and we thought, certainly this is going to happen--and we discovered it wasn't.

Matt: And when it didn't just happen, the burden was in our heart of "why isn't this happening?" Of course, we had so many conversations, it felt like it was every conversation. We couldn't go out to eat. We couldn't have a date without it coming up. And it just enveloped our entire life.

Laura: We just continued to pray and we just felt like, "OK, God, we're going to give this to you." And you don't want us to move forward with some of these recommendations that the doctors thought may or may not help. And that was scary because we didn't know what that meant for our family. "OK, God, you're telling us don't do this, but we're still not getting pregnant." And so we just had to open our hands and say, here you go. And we didn't know what that meant. So that was really tough.



**“IN THAT MOMENT, ALL THE  
UNEXPLAINED INFERTILITY  
AND ALL OF THE PRAYERS  
AND CONFUSION,  
IT ALL MADE SENSE.  
THAT PAIN DIDN'T HAVE  
A HOLD ON US ANYMORE.”  
- LAURA**

Matt: You know, as our hearts began to change from looking at a natural family to going “Are we going to have a family?”, we started asking these real questions in our hearts and minds. And, you know, of course, thankfully, we love and appreciate one another, but we feel like our family should be something more, something different. I had the opportunity in chiropractic school to do a chiropractic mission trip and we actually went to Bolivia. And the connection with these kids and just the love and the compassion with these kids, and just in the simplicity of giving them a hard candy they were your best friend for the rest of your life, and it was such a blessing. And I told her, the one souvenir I want is I want to bring home a kid. And she, of course, thought that was a silly statement.

Laura: The whole rest of the trip, God just was moving in my heart. We had never really even talked about adoption. And it was so interesting because he was thousands of miles away and he comes home and we talk about it. And it was just goosebumps to how God was moving with him and opening his heart and the same for me.

Matt: When it comes to, you know, making the choice, it was a choice outside of ourselves because I had just graduated chiropractic school, which isn't free. I just bought a brand new office. It isn't free. We had just bought a brand new house. It isn't free. So all these other costs were burdening on top of us. And we went, “Lord, this is what you're calling us to do.” So we took this leap of faith and God provided. And by the time our son, Joshua, was in our arms, everything was paid for. I don't know how. I have no clue how, but everything was paid for. If you asked me to actually try to work back and account the numbers, I don't know. It just happened. The other blessing as well is my Aunt Sue and my Uncle Nate have three amazing adopted kids, and their daughter is adopted from Guatemala. So it just felt the Lord was speaking and saying, “Look at this connection. You can adopt this child and he will immediately have a cousin that is 100% Guatemalan as well.” And so that was a tremendous blessing and a push for us. And that's why we pursued that route.

Laura: So we officially had gotten all the paperwork done. And then you get put on a waiting list and it's typically months and months and months. Two weeks onto this list, and I get a phone call at work on May 26, 2006. And our social worker said, "you have a son."

**IN THAT MOMENT, ALL THE UNEXPLAINED INFERTILITY  
AND ALL OF THE PRAYERS AND CONFUSION,  
IT ALL MADE SENSE. THAT PAIN DIDN'T HAVE A HOLD  
ON US ANYMORE.**

Matt: Every single day we get to stare in the eyes, we get to tuck into bed, we get to give hugs and kisses to and giggle and tickle and have a wonderful time with an answered prayer. It's such a gift. It's such a blessing, and we're not worthy of that. That's just another aspect of grace. We don't deserve to be able to have this clear of an answered prayer. We've not done anything to earn that. We just opened up our hands wide and said, "Lord, this is a path you're taking us on. We're going to keep going towards it until you tell us to stop." And oh, by the way, it stopped. On February 5th, 2007, we got Joshua in our arms and we just went, "Yep, it all makes sense now. We got it."

Laura: I really recommend that you just give it to the Lord and don't try to fight your Goliath on your own. He wants to come alongside you. He wants to help you.

**AND THOSE PRAYERS DON'T GET ANSWERED OVERNIGHT. AND  
SOMETIMES THEY DON'T LOOK HOW YOU ANTICIPATE, BUT IT  
JUST REQUIRES A LOT OF PATIENCE AND PERSEVERANCE AND  
JUST TRULY TRUSTING GOD IN EVERY SITUATION.**



# ISAIAH

## GOD WILL MAKE THINGS RIGHT

### ISAIAH 6-7, 52-53

#### GOD'S MESSAGE BRINGS HOPE INTO THE DARKNESS.

Isaiah's message as a prophet was two-fold. He was a prophet in Jerusalem who God used to call out Israel's idolatry and abandonment of God's laws and decrees. He used his prophetic voice to warn the leaders of Israel that judgment was coming through the Assyrians and Babylonians. In the midst of his prophecy about God's judgement, he also prophesied about the coming hope of rescue and God's desire to use Israel to show Himself to the nations around Israel, just as He had promised them in the covenant with Abraham.

Isaiah's ministry is a reminder to us that God has set His people apart and He desires for us to live lives that show that to Him and also to the world around us. We see through the warnings of Isaiah and the judgement of God that disobedience and unrighteous living have severe consequences and that living in right relationship with God provides us with hope and restoration.

#### PRACTICING SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES:

### PRAYER

One of the simplest ways to stay centered and connected to God is through prayer. Sometimes

prayer is seen as difficult or mystical, but we have the opportunity to speak with the God of the universe every single day. What do you think of when you think about prayer? What are the words that come to mind? Sometimes people have issues with praying because it feels like we're talking to someone who doesn't verbally respond. Some of the most beautiful prayers are laying ourselves bare with our fears and weaknesses before a God who loves us and understands how we feel. If you struggle with the idea of prayer, follow the template that Jesus gave his followers - The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13). This prayer follows six specific movements:

***Recognizing God's Character.***

***Inviting God's Kingdom.***

***Asking for God's Provision.***

***Seeking God's Forgiveness.***

***Requesting God's Guidance.***

***Understanding God's Protection.***

Try praying through each of these aspects this week. Where do you need to see God move? Treat it like a conversation - not just a monologue where you ask for what you need and then go about your business. How does God want to speak back to you?

## PRAYER

Using the themes from Practicing Spiritual Disciplines, choose one theme each day and write a prayer surrounding how you see that aspect in your life. Maybe you need God's protection in a situation or for Him to provide in a real way. Take time to write out how you think God is answering you through scripture and your time with Him.

[illegible]

**KEY VERSES:**

Isaiah prophesied that although we were broken in our worship of false gods, God was sending rescue for us. There is nowhere else that this dual message shines as brightly than in the words we will look at this week. Take time to memorize and meditate on these truths this week.

**“BUT HE WAS  
PIERCED FOR OUR  
TRANSGRESSIONS;  
HE WAS CRUSHED  
FOR OUR INIQUITIES;  
UPON HIM WAS THE  
CHASTISEMENT  
THAT BROUGHT US  
PEACE, AND WITH  
HIS WOUNDS WE ARE  
HEALED. ALL WE  
LIKE SHEEP HAVE  
GONE ASTRAY; WE  
HAVE TURNED—  
EVERY ONE—TO HIS  
OWN WAY; AND THE  
LORD HAS LAID ON  
HIM THE INIQUITY OF  
US ALL.”**

**ISAIAH 53:5-6**

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

**Write** - Pick one verse that stands out to you from today's passage. Write that verse out in your prayer journal. Read over this verse several times and pray for God to illuminate its meaning.

**Observe** - 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 God include this passage in scripture? What do these observations teach you about God?

**Relevance** - 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?

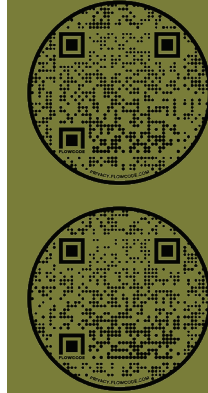
**Declare** - Write out any promises that you've gleaned from these portions of scripture, whether explicitly stated or inferred. Declare these promises over your life in prayer. Ask God for His will and His timing in these promises.

## BELONG

For a video overview of Isaiah, see these videos by The Bible Project:

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/isaiah-1-39/>

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/isaiah-40-66/>



## GROW

In Isaiah 6:8 how did Isaiah respond to the Lord's call for someone to send? What did his response indicate regarding his faith? What have you been called to do? How did you respond to that call? How can you be as eager to meet your call as Isaiah was?

### Read Isaiah 52

How does this chapter reflect Isaiah's persistence in ministry? Why is persistence important?

In what ways have you been persistent in ministry?

Are there areas in which additional persistence would be beneficial on your part?

How was Isaiah dependable? Why is dependability an important character trait?

How does your behavior reflect this trait?

What areas for further development in dependability may you wish to pursue?

If you are a parent, how can you help your children develop persistence and dependability?

If you are not a parent, what opportunities may you have to help children and young adults to develop these traits?

In Isaiah 6 and Isaiah 52, how was Isaiah's faith evident?

How is your faith evident?



# REACH

**Read Isaiah 6:8, 52:7, and Matthew 28:19-20.**

As believers in Christ, what are we instructed to do?

How have you met that call?

What more do you need to do to meet that call?

Has it been more difficult to “go” over the past year? Why or why not?

What creative methods to reach others have you observed and/or used in this past year?

How can you rise to the challenge?

# GOING DEEPER

Using a Study Bible, consider the culture that Isaiah experienced.

What are some of the similarities and/or differences in the culture surrounding Isaiah and our culture?

How did he rise to the challenges inherent to being a prophet in that culture?

What can we learn as modern-day believers from Isaiah regarding meeting the challenges that we might face in living a life of faith, meeting our calling, and proclaiming the Gospel?



# JEREMIAH

## ONLY GOD CAN CHANGE THE HUMAN HEART

### JEREMIAH 31:31–34; LAMENTATIONS 3:21–24

THE CROSS OF JESUS IS GOD'S CENTRAL MEANS OF RECONCILING A SINFUL PEOPLE TO HIS SINLESS SELF.

Jeremiah was an Israelite priest and prophet who not only prophesied about the exile at the hands of the Babylonian empire, but lived through the destruction of Jerusalem. The book of Jeremiah was written as a compilation of all of Jeremiah's teachings and prophecies as well as second hand stories about him. Throughout this time, Jeremiah teaches that only right living with God will provide for the rescue of God's people from destruction. We see this beautifully in Jeremiah 31:31-34 where he teaches about the coming of the Messiah and the covenant with God. This new covenant was a promise that each person could truly know God and walk in relationship with Him.

Lamentations is a companion book of Jeremiah as it details the siege and destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of the Babylonians as they carried the Israelites into exile through five distinct poems. In the midst of the lament of the brokenness of Israel, we see shining rays of hope of God's restoration of His people through the forthcoming Messiah. ***Even in the darkest places there is always hope, but it's only through the saving work of God through His son, Jesus Christ.***

### PRAYER

Is there something in your life that you need hope for? Maybe it's a broken relationship, a diagnosis, or any number of situations that affect the human condition. Have you taken the time to lament the situation? Take time to pray and to journal about how this situation is making you feel and where you are finding God in the midst of it. Use the steps in Practicing Spiritual Disciplines to walk through a journey of lament. Then ask God for the hope that only He can provide in the midst of the storms.

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## PRACTICING SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES: LAMENT AND HOPE

Often in our culture we don't value the practice of lamenting. It's often easy to talk ourselves out of what we perceive as negative emotions because we believe that God is not in them. We believe that joy and happiness are synonymous and that hope has to exist without tinges of lament. God created our emotions to honor Himself and to see Him through the depth of what we're feeling. God even lamented in scripture and honors those who mourn and lament. What if we viewed lament as something that God has called us to instead of hurrying past our negative emotions? Godly lament allows us to feel the depth of our brokenness so that we can see the true hope that God has for us. This lament and grieving can happen when we realize the depth of our sin, when we lose something or someone close to us, and when we are met with tragic situations. God wants to speak to us even in the depths of our emotion.

Here are a few steps to walking through lament:

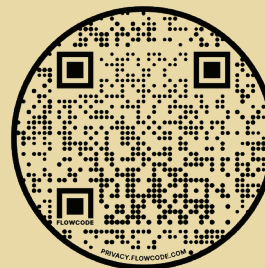
***Turn your heart to God in the midst of deep emotions. Bring forward your feelings and emotions to God. Ask God boldly to see you, hear you, and be present in the depths. Trust in God. This doesn't mean to wash the feelings away. Trust Him with them.***

Walking through lament can strengthen our relationship with God in incredible ways. We have to focus on doing this in a way that is honoring to Him instead of languishing in sorrow. When we invite Him into the depths of our sorrows and brokenness, we can realize that He has a plan for even those emotions.

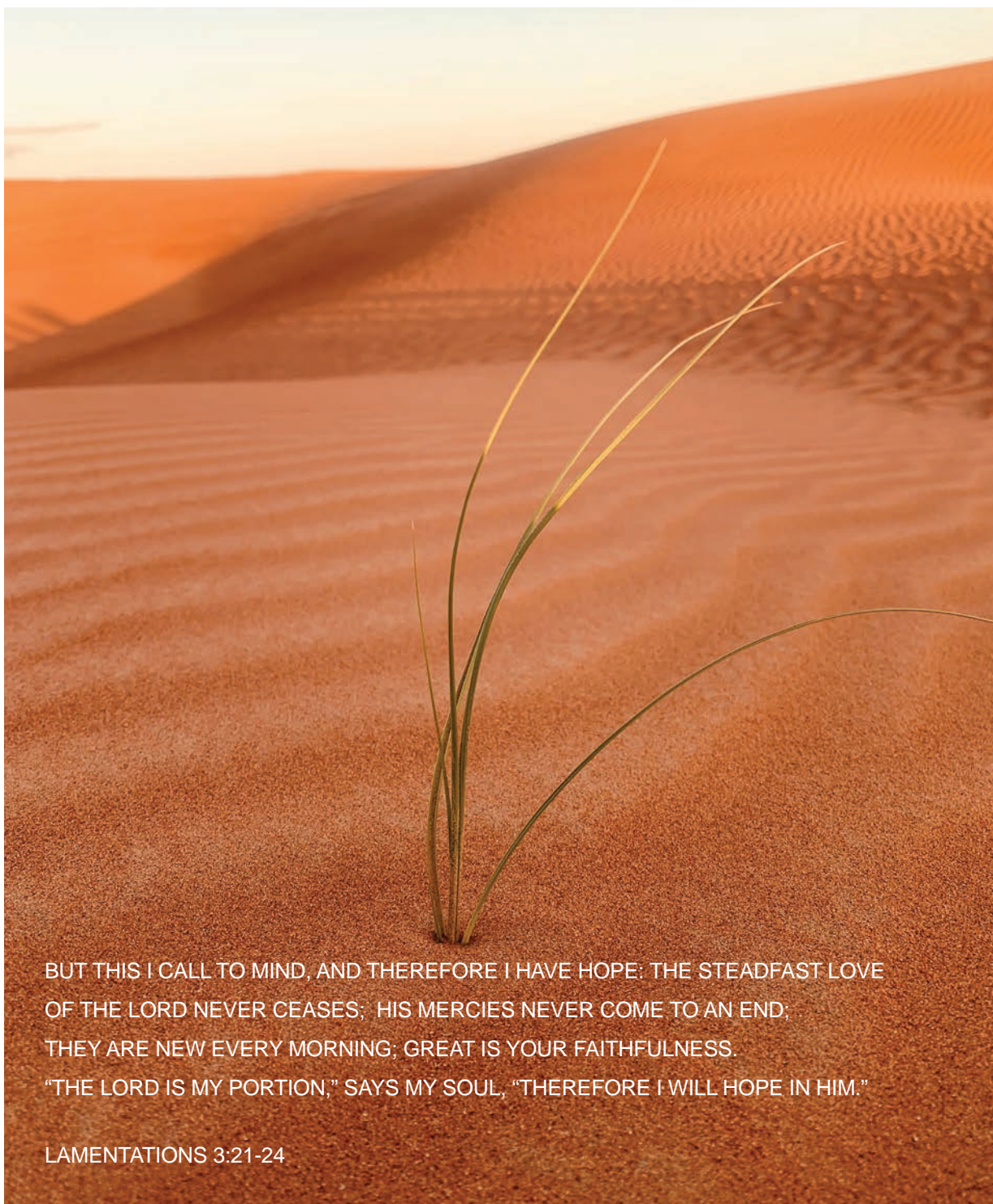
## LEARNING THE LANGUAGE OF LAMENT

### THE CROSSWAY PODCAST

*MARK VROEGOP, AUTHOR OF DARK CLOUDS, DEEP MERCY: DISCOVERING THE GRACE OF LAMENT, SHARES HIS FAMILY'S STORY OF LOSS AND GRIEF WHEN CONFRONTED WITH THE DEATH OF HIS UNBORN DAUGHTER, RECOUNTING HOW GOD USED THAT EXPERIENCE TO INTRODUCE HIM TO THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF LAMENT—AN HONEST YET FAITH-FILLED WAY OF RELATING TO OUR PAIN ILLUSTRATED THROUGHOUT SCRIPTURE.*







BUT THIS I CALL TO MIND, AND THEREFORE I HAVE HOPE: THE STEADFAST LOVE  
OF THE LORD NEVER CEASES; HIS MERCIES NEVER COME TO AN END;  
THEY ARE NEW EVERY MORNING; GREAT IS YOUR FAITHFULNESS.  
"THE LORD IS MY PORTION," SAYS MY SOUL, "THEREFORE I WILL HOPE IN HIM."

LAMENTATIONS 3:21-24

Lamentations is an exercise in Godly mourning. This portion of scripture is remembering that despite the brokenness of Israel's situation, there is still hope in the Lord. Meditate and memorize these verses this week as you focus on God's promises.

*Prepare - Put away distractions and ask God to prepare your heart for your reading and journaling time.*

*Learn - 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.*

Ask Questions - 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?

Name Truth - 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?

Take Action - 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!



## BELONG

Have you ever tried to dissuade someone from doing something they really wanted to do?

Did you experience that as something that was easy or difficult?

Have you ever made a promise only to discover later you had broken it? How do you usually respond? (apologize, justify, ignore)

## GROW

**Read Jeremiah 31:31-34 aloud together.**

What new covenant do you think is being spoken of? (See Hebrews 8)

Why was a new covenant necessary?

What was required of the people under the old covenant?

Have you felt God pursuing a deeper relationship with you?

If so, what was your experience like?

What do you think it means scripture says

"I will put my law within them, and write it on their hearts."?

Consider Ephesians 3, meditating on verse 17. Where does love originate?

Have you ever had someone forgive you for something fairly significant?

If so, how did that forgiveness impact your relationship with them?

According to Jeremiah 31:34, we will all know the Lord. How will He be made known?

Ask someone to read:

**Romans 3:23**

**Romans 6:23**

**Romans 5:8**

**Ephesians 2:8-9**

## REACH

Consider Lamentations 3:21-24. Who might you share this hope with this week?



# DANIEL

## GOD LOVES YOU THROUGH ADVERSITY

### DANIEL 1 & 6

**FAITH IN THE ONE TRUE GOD ENDURES THROUGH  
ALL ADVERSITY.**

Daniel has a lot to teach us about the character of God and how to follow Him diligently. Taken from Israel, into captivity, Daniel displays a life of Godly character against the backdrop of one of the most wicked and broken civilizations that has ever existed. The Babylonians were a picture of excess, drunkenness, idol worship, and sin. Daniel was offered the opportunity to rise highly in the ranks of their leadership through means that would dishonor God, but he stood tall with integrity.

When life throws hardships at us and it's easier to fold, we have a hope that God is steadfast and faithful. When we walk in his footsteps and follow His plan, we aren't promised that life will be easy, but we are promised that He will be with us - even when an entire nation seems to be against us. Daniel's faith in God and His desire to honor Him held him steadfast through one of the most challenging and difficult stories that we read in the Bible. God's favor over Daniel's life didn't just sustain him, but caused him to thrive.

### PRACTICING SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES: FAITHFULNESS

Daniel's life reminds us that faithfulness in the small and in the big things is honoring to God and serves God's purpose in the world around us. Sometimes we look at the big peaks and valleys of life and think that God is most honored when we win in those moments, but often we find in scripture that God is delighted in a slow and consistent life of faithfulness. Eugene Peterson called this a long obedience in the same direction. So what can you do this week that will continue to build on simple faithfulness? This might look like honoring commitments, reading your Bible, praying, spending time in community, following through for others, etc.

**A quiet life of faithfulness is a beautiful spiritual discipline that serves us in being consistent and pointing others towards God.**

## KEY VERSES

Daniel's trust in the Lord provided for the whole nation of Babylon to see what God's power and greatness looks like, even despite being placed in the lion's den. This wasn't the first time or the last that Daniel's faithfulness to God presented an opportunity to worship Him and to show others who God truly is. This week, spend time meditating on these verses and praising God for who He is.

“...TREMBLE AND FEAR BEFORE THE GOD  
OF DANIEL, FOR HE IS THE LIVING GOD,  
ENDURING FOREVER; HIS  
KINGDOM SHALL NEVER BE DESTROYED,  
AND HIS DOMINION SHALL BE TO THE END.  
HE DELIVERS AND RESCUES; HE WORKS  
SIGNS AND WONDERS IN HEAVEN AND  
ON EARTH, HE WHO HAS SAVED DANIEL  
FROM THE POWER OF THE LIONS.”

## DANIEL 6:26-27

## PRAYER

Where does God want you to focus your faithfulness this week? Write out prayers asking Him. Then pray about ways that you might follow Him in small acts of faithfulness. Daniel was ultimately ready for the lion's den because he walked a steady walk of faithfulness with God even when others didn't. Take time to thank God for His faithfulness in your life as well.

[illegible]

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

Read the verses several times just taking them at face value.

Choose 1 or 2 of the verses that stand out to you and write them out word for word in your journal.

What stands out to you about the passage? About the verses you wrote out?

What observations can you make about the character of God from these verses?

Why is this principle important?

How can you put these observations and principles into action this week? Maybe it means trusting God more, or writing the verse in a prominent place to remind you. Maybe it means stepping out and telling others more about God. Come up with a solid application and do it!

Thank God for His gifts. Thank Him for who He is. Ask Him for what you need.

Offer Him the fruits of the application step above and ask for His help to keep you moving towards Him!



## BACKGROUND

Daniel was a youth who was taken as a captive when Babylon defeated the southern kingdom of Judah in 586 BC. Daniel spent most of his life in Babylon and the book of Daniel was written during the 70 years when the Jews were removed from their land as a judgment by God for their unfaithfulness. Daniel is one of only a few characters in scripture who doesn't have any failings/shortcomings included as part of their story.

## BELONG

Describe a time you were in another country/culture. What things were difficult?  
What things were surprising?

## GROW

**Read 2 Chronicles 36:1-10 and Daniel 1:1-7.**

What was Daniel's life like in Judah and then in Babylon?

What positive and negative influences did Daniel experience?

Why would it have been easy for Daniel to compromise his beliefs?

What are some ways you are tempted to compromise your beliefs?

How did Daniel show respect for those in authority while he sought a way to maintain his convictions? When is it right to openly defy those in authority? When is it not?

How did God protect and bless Daniel and his friends?

## REACH

How can you take a step of faith by living out your beliefs among those who don't share them with you?

How has God protected and blessed you? For what purpose has He protected and blessed you?

# JONAH

## GOD LOVES YOU DESPITE YOUR WICKEDNESS

### 1 SAMUEL 15–17

**GOD'S GRACE IS GREATER THAN OUR SIN.**

Timothy Keller famously said that, “You are more wicked than ever dared believe and yet, you are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than you ever dared hope.” This was the case with Jonah. What was meant to be a simple journey to warn people of their sins turned into a wild ride of disobedience and God getting his attention in a drastic way. Even after he finally delivered God’s warning, his heart was full of bitterness.

We can fall into the same boat when we think that others aren’t worthy of God’s grace or that our plans are more important than what God has called us to.

**The wickedness in our hearts would love to take root and try to have us believe that His grace can’t sustain us.**

Let’s take a lesson from Jonah and lean fully and deeply into God’s mercy and grace so that we can embrace the love and acceptance of Jesus Christ.

### PRACTICING SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES: CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE

While it’s true that our sin has the power to corrupt us and keep us from walking in God’s light, confession and repentance bring our sins to the light and show us how deeply God’s grace can extend. We know from John 1:9 that when we confess our sins, He is faithful to not only forgive us, but to cleanse us from our unrighteousness. The beauty of confession is that it reminds us that we aren’t perfect and that we need a savior. Repentance is a continual walking away from the sin that so easily traps us. When we actively combine these two practices, we embrace a more humble and simple lifestyle that attacks our pride and helps us to point others towards Jesus. Practice these disciplines this week.

## PRAYER

Think about confession and repentance. Are there any sins that you need to confess to God this week? Take time to write about them. Is there anything that keeps you from living a life of repentance? What are those things? Ask God to guide you in these steps and continue to walk in humility with Him in your prayer times this week.

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## KEY VERSES

This prayer from Jonah came at a truly desperate time where he needed rescue despite his unwillingness to follow God. We all have times in our lives where it would be easy to run away, but God has a bigger plan. Meditate and memorize these verses this week as you think of God's truth.

**"When my life was fainting away,  
I remembered the LORD, and  
my prayer came to you,  
into your holy temple.  
Those who pay regard to vain  
idols forsake their hope of  
steadfast love.  
But I with the voice of  
thanksgiving will sacrifice to you;  
what I have vowed I will pay.  
Salvation belongs to the  
LORD!"  
JONAH 2:7-9**

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

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?





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“You are more  
wicked than ever  
dared believe and  
yet, you are more  
loved and accepted  
in Jesus Christ  
than you ever  
dared hope. ”

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## BACKGROUND

Jonah was a prophet to the northern kingdom of Israel during the reign of Jeroboam 2, 75-100 years before Assyria conquered Israel as part of His judgment of them for their sins. During this time Israel was prosperous, but was not following the Lord. Assyria was a rising power in the region and Nineveh was their capital city. Besides the book of Jonah, Jonah is referred to in 2 Kings 14:25. Jesus pointed to the sign of Jonah in Luke 11:29-30 when people asked Him for a sign of His messiah-ship.

## BELONG

If you have free time, what do you like to spend your time doing?

## GROW

**In Jonah 1 (vs. 1-3)** why do you think Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh and pronounce God's judgment against it?

**Jonah 2** records Jonah's prayer while he was inside the great fish. What does Jonah talk to God about? How does this prayer show great faith in God's salvation?

**Read Jonah 3 (vs. 1-3).** What similarities/differences do these verses have to Jonah 1:1-3?

**In Jonah 3:10-4:1** what convinced the Ninevites to repent? Why did this anger Jonah? Have you ever struggled with God's blessing those you dislike?

How does this story show how believers sometimes misunderstand God's will because of their own desires/preferences? Describe a time when you fell into this type of trap?

## REACH

In what ways might your preferences make it difficult for you to hear God's voice?

Who would benefit from you being willing to let go of these?

What things do allow yourself to focus on that distract you from listening to God?

# HOSEA

## GOD LOVES YOU DESPITE YOUR ADULTEROUS HEART

### HOSEA 1-3

**THE PURSUING LOVE OF GOD IS THE GREATEST WONDER OF THE SPIRITUAL UNIVERSE.**

Hosea is a radical story. God's great plan of redemption and restoration are put on display in drastic ways as Hosea follows His leading as a prophet. Hosea is married to Gomer who is unfaithful and adulterous. To make a point to the nation of Israel, God instructs Hosea to continue to pursue Gomer and pay off her debts even after she regularly cheats on him.

Do you see the parallels here? The nation of Israel (and really, us if we're being honest) continues to run around with other gods and do what is right in their own eyes and God is patiently pursuing His people in the midst of it all. While this was a hard lesson for Hosea to live out, it perfectly shows the heartbreak and desire of God for His people as He loves perfectly and always seeks to restore His people back to Him - even when we definitely don't deserve it.

### PRACTICING SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES: UNCOVERING IDENTITY

When we don't know our identity, we can fall for anything. Looking at Hosea and Gomer, we see this drastically. Hosea knew who he was in God and knew that He was capable of extending radical love, even in heartbreaking situations. Gomer didn't understand her identity and continually fell into sin and brokenness. As we walk with Jesus longer and longer, we discover more of the identity that God gives us as we are adopted in. We go from broken to righteous, orphan to adopted, unloved to loved, and so many more beautiful shifts. The practice of uncovering our identity is rooted in meditating on what we are believing about ourselves and replacing those things with Biblical truths until we truly receive the gift from God and believe those aspects about ourselves. Take time to ask God what lies or deceptive tendencies you are believing about yourself. Do a cursory search on the internet for, "What does the Bible say about..." and enter those aspects. Find scripture that speaks truth to the transformation that God has made in you. Cling to those verses in times that you are tempted to fall back into old thought patterns. Embrace your new identity with fervor.



**I BELIEVE** \_\_\_\_\_

**ABOUT MYSELF.**

**BUT GOD'S WORD SAYS** \_\_\_\_\_

**ABOUT ME.**

## HOSEA 2: 21-23

“And in that day I will answer,  
declares the LORD,  
I will answer the heavens,  
and they shall answer the earth,  
and the earth shall answer the grain,  
the wine, and the oil,  
and they shall answer Jezreel,  
and I will sow her for myself in the land.  
And I will have mercy on No Mercy,  
and I will say to Not My People, ‘You are my people’;  
and he shall say, ‘You are my God.’ ”

## PRAYER

Take all of the words, thoughts, feelings, actions, fears, and convictions that you’ve just experienced in your reading time and offer them to the Lord in prayer. Ask Him to illuminate what He would have you do with them.

Simply talk to God and tell Him how you are feeling. Confess any anxieties, praise Him for who He is, ask Him for what you need. Take time to record your prayers in a prayer journal.

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

READING: Begin with reading through the passage 2-3 times and really seek to understand the individual words, phrases, and thoughts that make up the passage. Take time to journal any specifics that stand out to you. Don't try to add your own meaning, but read the text as it comes off of the page. The goal is not to see the words with your eyes, but to feel them in your heart, mind, and soul.

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MEDITATION: This step has everything to do with thinking of specific chunks of the passage in front of you. Think about phrases and specific words that stood out to you. Focus intently on why the Holy Spirit might have chosen these words to speak to you today. Reflect on how it might apply to your life. Is it relevant to something that you are going through? Does it bring to mind a struggle you have been dealing with? Journal some thoughts that followed your meditation time.

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CONTEMPLATION: Be silent in the presence of the Lord. Relax, Embrace, and just Be with the Lord. Don't rush this. Quiet your mind and soul and sit patiently with Him. Take time after contemplation to write down your experience with God in silence.

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## BACKGROUND

Hosea was a prophet to the northern kingdom of Israel during the reign of Jeroboam 2, a wicked king. The book is 12 chapters long and consists mostly of God's judgments of Israel. Chapters 1-3 contains the story of how God commanded Hosea to marry an unfaithful woman named Gomer. They had three children but Gomer went to pursue other lovers and ends up destitute and homeless. Hosea pursues her again, pays her debts and restores her as his wife. Hosea's marriage to Gomer is a picture of God's relationship to Israel (and in some ways all who find salvation).

## BELONG

Describe a relationship of yours that was broken for a time but was eventually restored? What made the change?  
What things are hardest for you to forgive?

## GROW

**From Hosea 1,** what are the names of Gomer's three children and what is the significance of these names?

**Read Hosea 2.** How was Gomer's unfaithfulness similar to Israel's?  
In what ways do we sometimes treat God the same way?

**Read Hosea 3.** What does it teach us about God's love and His ultimate plan for Israel?

How has God shown you the depth of your sin and the value of His salvation?

What things in your life turn your attention and affection away from God?

## REACH

Who is God calling you to love (and forgive) the way He loves (and forgives) you?



# MALACHI

## GOD'S NAME IS TO BE REVERED

### MALACHI 1-4

THE GLORY OF GOD'S NAME IS TO BE ON DISPLAY IN THE LIVES OF  
THOSE WHO CALL ON GOD'S NAME.

In Malachi, the Israelites are back from captivity and have rebuilt the temple, but are proven to be every bit as corrupt and idolatrous as their ancestors. Malachi is called by God to prophesy in order to expose and confront Israel's corruption. Malachi continues to present that God's name is holy and is to be revered while the Israelites continue to take God's name in vain and walk in a way that is right in their own eyes.

***We learn from Malachi that God is worthy of worship and that everything that we build in our own image amounts to dust.***

No matter how hard we try to do things our own way and build up a kingdom in our own image, God's kingdom is always better and is the only way to find true life. Malachi is a shining reminder that the Messiah is coming and that He desires a relationship with us instead of what we can do for Him. We are called to worship the God of the universe with our lives.

### PRACTICING SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES: WORSHIP

God desires worship that is pure and undefiled. Worship is the idea that we are giving worth to something, so we tend to worship everything in our lives in some way or another. Are we pouring out our true and deep worship towards God or towards other things? Take time to consider this week all of the things that you regularly provide worth to. It might be hobbies or family or other good things or it might be negative things that fully change our hearts. What type of worship does God ask for? This week make an inventory of the things you are intentionally or inadvertently worshipping. Ask God to illuminate these things. Then take time to consider your desire to worship God against these things.

**KEY VERSE – TAKE TIME TO REFLECT ON THESE VERSES THIS WEEK AS YOU THINK ABOUT THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH AND WHAT JESUS MEANS FOR US:**

**“BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER, AND HE WILL PREPARE THE WAY BEFORE ME. AND THE LORD WHOM YOU SEEK WILL SUDDENLY COME TO HIS TEMPLE; AND THE MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT IN WHOM YOU DELIGHT, BEHOLD, HE IS COMING, SAYS THE LORD OF HOSTS. BUT WHO CAN ENDURE THE DAY OF HIS COMING, AND WHO CAN STAND WHEN HE APPEARS? FOR HE IS LIKE A REFINER’S FIRE..”**

# MALACHI 3:1-2

## PRAYER

In your prayer time this week, pick out a song or two that we normally sing on Sunday mornings at church. What are some of the words that speak to you? What do they make you think about God? How are you infusing these truths into your day-to-day life? How is this helping you worship? Write out prayers of worship to God this week and thank Him for who He is.

[illegible]



# IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH

A PIECE ON WORSHIP BY REINA JENKINS

*"For the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth." – John 4:23-24*



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I used to have a “fake it ‘til you make it” mentality when it came to worship. I thought it had to look a certain way; I thought it had to *feel* a certain way. Especially having a role where at times I’m on a platform worshipping in front of people and it’s my responsibility to *lead* them to a place I’m not sure that I’m at. The Lord has done lots of work in my heart over the years to reframe my thinking around this and lead *me* to a place of freedom in His presence.

Jesus’ words to the woman at the well echo in my heart often when I think of worship... *“in spirit and in truth.”* What is *‘spirit’*? It’s “the nonphysical part of a person which is the seat of emotions and character” (thank you, Google). It’s the *soul*. It’s whatever we’re thinking, feeling, doubting, believing, hoping, carrying at the time, but it’s also exponentially more. *“God is Spirit...”* We *need* the Holy Spirit in our worship. As I heard a wise person recently say, *we need God to worship God*. It’s like He’s removing every ounce of pressure that makes us think we have to have it together in order to glorify Him. Thank you, Jesus!!!

Now, what is *‘truth’*? That honestly feels like a super loaded question to me, especially at this time in our history. But I’m embracing that I don’t have to have the most eloquent answer here and instead I’m clinging to Jesus’ words in John 17:17 as He prayed for His disciples around the last supper table: *“Your Word is truth! So make them holy by the truth.”*

And now, here is the best news...

*“By God’s will we have been purified and made holy once and for all through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus, the Messiah! ... And now we are brothers and sisters in God’s family because of the blood of Jesus, and He welcomes us to come into the most holy sanctuary in the heavenly realm – boldly and without hesitation. For He has dedicated a new, life-giving way for us to approach God. For just as the veil was torn in two, Jesus’ body was torn open to give us free and fresh access to Him! And since we now have a magnificent High Priest to welcome us into God’s house, we come closer to God and approach Him with an open heart, fully convinced that nothing will keep us at a distance from Him. For our hearts have been sprinkled with blood to remove impurity, and we have been freed from an accusing conscience. Now we are clean, unstained, and presentable to God inside and out!”*

– Hebrews 10:10, 19-22 (TPT)

Lord, help us to worship You in Spirit and in Truth.

Amen.



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

**PURPOSE:** 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?

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

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

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**PROBLEMS:** 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.

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**PRACTICAL APPLICATION:** 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?

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## BELONG

When was the last time you gave a half-hearted effort toward a goal and realized too late that you should have put more focus and energy into it?

Have you ever failed to follow-through on a promise to someone else?

What happened to the relationship between you and the other person?

## GROW

In the book of Malachi, God addresses the nation of Israel, and confronts the priests for their half-hearted and incomplete adherence to the Law of God. God's people were promising Him their best, but giving Him their scraps and leftovers. Have a member of your group **read Malachi 1:6-9** and discuss what this type of behavior might look like in the present-day.

In order to fully get His point across, God gives the priests a past example of a truly devoted and obedient minister, their forefather, Levi.

Read the following verses and discuss Levi's traits that God recognized and valued:

**Malachi 2:5** – Levi feared God and stood in awe of His name.

**Malachi 2:6** – Levi offered true instruction and took care to ensure that every word he spoke was truth; because of Levi's obedience, he walked in peace and turned many of his brothers from iniquity.

**Malachi 2:7** – Levi protected and shared the knowledge of God, passing it down to the next generation, and delivered messages from God to the people.

Not only had the priests turned from God's instruction (and failed to follow through on their promises to God), they also exhibited self-pity because they were not receiving the blessings that they had hoped for! Have a member of your group **read Malachi 2:13-16** and discuss the parallels that God offers between an unfaithful husband and the state of the priests' hearts toward God.

But God, in His mercy and glory, offered Israel and Judah an opportunity to avoid the judgement that they had earned through their actions. **Read Malachi 3:6-12** and discuss God's grace and mercy exhibited in these verses.

To close, have a member of your group **read Malachi 3:16-18**, and discuss as a group what you think was in the "book of remembrance." If we had been a part of the nation of Israel at that time, do you believe we would have made the distinction of "righteous" or "wicked"?

## REACH

This prophetic book offers some stern warnings, but also some great reminders of God's consistency, mercy, and glory. Are there any areas of your life which you are not offering your best or giving full glory to God? Who in your life do you feel brings glory to God most consistently? What does he/she do that you could emulate over the coming weeks?

# A NEW COVENANT IS COMING

**THIS GUIDE CONCLUDES OUR TIME IN TEACHING THROUGH THE OLD TESTAMENT. THE NEW TESTAMENT AND NEW COVENANT ARE COMING! TAKE TIME TO REFLECT BACK ON YOUR JOURNEY IN THIS SERIES SO FAR AND THEN TAKE SOME TIME IN ANTICIPATION TO PREPARE YOUR HEART FOR THE NEXT STAGE OF OUR JOURNEY THROUGH THE BIBLE.**

The people of Israel waited 400 years for the promise of the Messiah after the last words of the book of Malachi. This was a time of silence and anticipation. For us, the story continues next week, so let's look ahead in anticipation for what God will do through His church!

## **TAKE TIME TO PRAY THROUGH THESE PROMPTS:**

Thank God for what He has illuminated to you over the last 7 months.

Thank God for the difficult and sweet times.

Ask God to prepare your heart like soil for the seeds that He wants to plant as you continue in The Journey.

Ask God to draw you into His presence and for Him to illuminate your path as you prepare for the next stage.

Sit in His presence, listen to a song of praise, read scripture, reflect on verses you've memorized, or simply meditate on who He is.

# MAKE SPACE FOR REFLECTION

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THINK BACK FROM JANUARY TO NOW.

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE MOST IMPACTFUL MOMENTS THROUGHOUT  
THIS SERIES SO FAR? HOW HAVE YOU SEEN GOD TEACH YOU?

WHAT HAS BEEN THE HARDEST LESSON THAT YOU'VE LEARNED SO  
FAR IN THE JOURNEY? WHAT MADE IT DIFFICULT?

WHAT ARE THE SWEETEST TIMES THAT YOU CAN REMEMBER WITH THE  
LORD SO FAR ON THE JOURNEY?

WHAT ARE YOU MOST EXCITED FOR AS WE STEP INTO THE  
NEW TESTAMENT?

# Thank You

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

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