

10X LIVING



Awakening

This is why it is said: "Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

Ephesians 5:14-17

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.

Romans 12:1 NIV

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Every now and then a chance comes along to involve and invest ourselves in an opportunity to change history and write it for the better. I believe we are at that place.

Are you ready to experience a spiritual awakening?

Take a quick look through biblical history and all kingdom history throughout time. Whenever and wherever God's people organized and committed themselves to what God wanted to do in them and then through them, miracles happened. This is absolutely what is in front of us right now with **10X Awakening**. To say this time can change history is not an overstatement. I am praying for our individual and family histories to significantly move forward.

The 10X Rule essentially revolves around what is considered the Principle of Massive Action – the concept that any time you put an exceedingly great amount of effort into anything you do, you're guaranteed to achieve exceedingly great results. Your accountability and personal cooperation with God have far more to do with where you are with God than your circumstances.

10X means to accelerate and think bigger. But it's not so much about achieving more. It's about becoming more – the best version of you, the person God created you to be. If you chase 10X, you will become more disciplined, more focused, and more resilient. You will develop a growth mindset that allows you to push through obstacles and overcome challenges.

The 10X Rule emphasizes setting goals that are ten times greater than what you believe you can achieve and taking actions that are ten times more than what you think is necessary to reach those goals. 10X means you will push beyond what you have been doing and produce better results with 10 times more focus, intentionally, and commitment. Choose today to be

100% committed to staying connected to your small group and doing the work.

In Scripture, the number 10 often has special significance. It's the number for the perfect order, and has to do with timeline, how God carries out His plans, and sets things up for His purposes. It's all about God's Kingdom (and interestingly, the word "kingdom" first shows up in the Bible in Genesis 10:10). My favorite 10:10 is John 10:10, Jesus' mission statement: "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full!"

The number 10 also signifies God's almighty power and His desire to work with us to bring His plans and purposes to completion. That's where we are heading in **10X Awakening**. Personally, my soul is already stirred with visions of what God has in mind. I am walking with eyes wide open into the new year, ready to cooperate with God. I hope and pray you will join me. New Pointe, the world at its worst needs God's people at their best. Let's have a true **awakening!**

Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen. Ephesians 3:20-21 NLT

For Him and through Him,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dwight Mason". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'D' and 'M'.

Dwight Mason

Moon Shot

On April 20, 1961, newly elected President John F. Kennedy asked Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson what it would take to beat the Russians in the space race. Eight days earlier, the Soviets had put the first man in outer space and repeatedly outpaced the Americans in every phase.

In a memo to Johnson nine days later, the United States' top rocket scientist determined that the U.S. would likely lose to the Russians on all the logical next steps exploration. The Soviets were just too far ahead.

The memo also stated that if the U.S. stopped competing with the Russians and instead pushed toward something far outside the realm of immediate possibility – something that required immense will and commitment to attain – it could retake the lead before the end of the 1960s.

To win the space race, the U.S. would have to fully commit to landing a man on the moon.

Scientists estimated that getting to the moon would require a 10X increase in rocket technology. But the U.S. could do it if it stopped approaching these efforts as a peacetime program and instead intensified them to a wartime level.

It meant the U.S. had to re-imagine its plans and processes with this new vision in mind. It had to double the strength of its current infrastructure and invent new technologies that they never thought were possible.

Less than a month later, in an address to a joint session of Congress, President Kennedy set a national goal of landing a man on the moon before the end of the decade.

Eight years later the U.S. landed on the moon.

The Russians never made it.

Getting there required the effort of almost 400,000 people working together toward this common vision. Men, women, black, white, Asian, Hispanic, young, old. Astronauts, mission controllers, contractors, janitors, programmers, fabricators, professors, mathematicians, caterers, engineers, and hundreds of other types of people all doing their job to make it happen.

We are also in a race, but this race is to inspire as many people as possible to follow Jesus.

We have an enemy. But our enemy is not flesh and blood. Instead, it is the spiritual forces of evil that rule this world (Ephesians 6:12). Our job in this fight is to partner with God so that His will is done "ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN" (Matthew 6:10).

Most measures, however, say we are not winning. Depression, suicide, divorce, loneliness, and mental health issues are all rising. The world is controlled by those dark forces, and they are consuming our families, schools, and neighborhoods. And though large by church standards, the people who make up NewPointe today pale in comparison to the growing onslaught.

We need an Awakening – a tide-shifting move of God seen at various times in history. Every Awakening shares a common beginning: a group of people with immense will and commitment, willing to put forth a wartime level of effort to push past the boundaries of the "possible" to witness the impossible: entire communities, cities, and countries brought to faith in Jesus Christ.

A space shuttle is shown in orbit above the Earth. The shuttle is white with black and grey details, and is angled towards the bottom left. The Earth's surface is visible below, showing a mix of blue oceans, white clouds, and brownish-green landmasses. The top of the image shows the dark expanse of space with a few stars and the bright glow of the sun's rays from the top left corner.

TRANSFORMED IN MY SPIRITUAL HEALTH

SESSION 1

SESSION 1

TRANSFORMED IN MY SPIRITUAL HEALTH

CHECKING IN

- If this is your first time to meet as a group, or if you have any new group members, be sure to introduce yourselves.
- Before you begin this study, we recommend that you review the Small Group Guidelines on page 136.
- Share with the group what you hope to get out of this small group series.

MEMORY VERSE

Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! 2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT

**WATCH THE VIDEO LESSON NOW AND FOLLOW ALONG
IN YOUR OUTLINE.**

Transformed in My Spiritual Health

Seven Habits for Spiritual Health:

1. I must _____ supremely.

If you want to be my follower, you must love me more than your own father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters – yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple. Luke 14:26 NLT

Spiritual health is measured by _____.

The most important commandment is this: “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart (passionately), all your soul (willfully), all your mind (thoughtfully), and all your strength (practically – live like you love him).”

2. I must _____.

Blessed are those who listen to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway. Proverbs 8:34 NIV

3. I must _____ and _____ His Word.

Blessed is the one ... whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever they do prospers. Psalm 1:1-3 NIV

You are my friends if you do what I command. John 15:14 NIV

But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it – not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it – they will be blessed in what they do. James 1:25 NIV

4. I must _____ my income.

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.” Malachi 3:10 NIV

You cannot out-give God!

5. I must learn to _____.

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

John 13:35 NIV

If someone says, "I love God," but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see?

1 John 4:20 NLT

Spiritual growth happens in _____.

6. I must _____
_____.

For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many. Mark 10:34 NLT

7. I must pass on the _____.

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. 2 Timothy 2:2 NIV

You're going to go to heaven because somebody told you about Jesus Christ. And somebody told the somebody who told you. And somebody told the somebody who told the somebody who told you. Is the chain going to break with You? Is anybody going to be in heaven because of you? If you don't tell somebody, then who is going to tell them? Jesus says that to be a disciple you must pass on the Good News.

Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Matthew 28:19-20 NLT

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS (PICK AT LEAST ONE OR TWO)

- What seems to get in the way of your spiritual growth?

- In the video you learned about the importance of a **daily time with God**. How do you have a **daily time with God**? What is your normal routine? What typically interferes with your **time with God**?

- Why is being in a small group and serving others so important to your spiritual growth? What can you learn through relationships that you can't learn on your own?

- In the video it said, "**Spiritual growth is not automatic. It is a choice.**" In what ways have you chosen to grow spiritually? What has been most effective in helping you grow?

DAY 1

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16 NIV

This is arguably the greatest verse in the entire Bible. There's a reason it has earned a spot on the bottom of fast-food, soft-drink cups and on signs behind goal posts at football games. Why? Because it is Christianity in a nutshell. It simply and clearly tells us the Good News of Jesus Christ in four points.

God is passionate about you. This verse says, *"God so loved the world."* You are part of the world. God loves you. His love isn't detached and impersonal. It is passionate. Do you know God loves you? He does.

He shows that love by His gift. That's the second point this verse tells us about God, *"... that he gave his one and only Son."* God's love for you cost him more than we could ever measure. He gave you Jesus. He gave you Jesus to pay for your sins and to provide a bridge between you and God.

The third point we learn from John 3:16 is God's proposal to us, *"That whoever believes in him ..."* We all have the opportunity to turn to Jesus. All it takes is belief. We don't have to earn God's love, all we have to do is accept his love in Jesus Christ.

When we do that, we gain the fourth point from this verse, God's promise: *"... shall not perish; but have eternal life."* What a deal! God loves you so much that he gave you Jesus. When you accept his proposal to believe in Christ, you gain the promise of eternal life. That is Good News.

If you haven't yet accepted God's proposal, do it today. If you have, live today in light of this verse. **God loves you; he gave you Jesus and promises eternal life.** That is what spiritual health is all about.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 2

Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. John 1:12-13 NIV

We are God's children. When we believe in Jesus Christ we are brought near to God the Father. So near in fact that he calls us his sons and daughters. We are a part of his family now. Fully received, fully loved, and fully accepted.

What does this mean? It means we get to share in the very same relationship of love and intimacy that Jesus had with the Father. Romans 8:15 NIV tells us, *The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."*

We should recognize this cry of *"Abba, Father."* We have heard it before on the lips of Jesus as he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus cried out, *"Abba, Father ... everything is possible for you"* (Mark 14:36a NIV). Incredibly, we address God as "Abba, Father" just as Jesus does. We talk to God like Jesus does. **He has granted us full access** (Ephesians 2:18). No constraints, no caveats, no limitations. We are received. We are accepted. We belong. So much so, that we can boldly pray, "Abba, Father," along with Jesus. We share in the relational intimacy, love, and bond that the Father and Son have known for all eternity.

Jesus, the divine Son by nature, has invited you, by grace, to participate in his life of love with the Father. This is how much you have been received in his family. This is how much you belong. This is how much your identity is secured. God the Father has welcomed you into his house. In fact, as you cry out "Abba, Father," he says back, "My beloved child." **The Creator of the universe cherishes you and delights in you.**

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 3

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. 1 John 4:4 KJV

God's Spirit is the power inside every fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ. Jesus promised every disciple, *"I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to help you and be with you forever - the Spirit of truth... (who) lives with you and will be in you"* (John 14:16-17 NIV). But what does the Holy Spirit do for us?

The Holy Spirit helps us learn and apply God's truth to life: *"The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my (Jesus') name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you"* (John 14:26 NIV).

The Holy Spirit builds our character through crisis: *"We know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us"* (Romans 5:3-5 NIV).

The Holy Spirit gives us power to speak the Good News of Jesus: *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses ... in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth"* (Acts 1:8 NLT).

The Holy Spirit equips us for ministry: *"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work"* (1 Corinthians 12:4-6 NIV).

When we are filled with the Spirit, God's power, peace, presence, and purpose are ours. We have stability under stress. We don't cave in because *"Greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the world"* (1 John 4:4 NIV).

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 4

When you come to Jesus Christ, it's like he writes everything you've ever done wrong on a big blackboard and then says, "We're just going to erase all that. We're going to start over. **You're going to get a fresh new start.**" It's not just turning over a new leaf but getting a totally new life. You become a new person. Jesus gives you a new spiritual identity.

Here's the blunt truth of why this is so important. **Every time you sin, it damages your dignity.** When you break God's principles, you don't just hurt other people and God, you hurt yourself. Sin splits your soul. Every time you sin, it replaces a little bit of self-respect with a little bit of shame. This shame begins to pile up in your life and you begin to try to push it out of the way by staying busy or playing sports or getting drunk or having parties or whatever.

Jesus Christ is in the dignity-restoring business. He doesn't just ignore your sin, he wipes it out and makes you a **new person** in his sight.

Hear this carefully. Because you are in Christ, it doesn't matter what you've done. It doesn't matter who you've done it with. It doesn't matter how long you've done it. It doesn't matter where you've been. What matters is what direction your feet are headed today. God says your past is history, your life has sanctity, and your identity has dignity because Jesus died for you. **When you trust Christ, he gives you a brand-new identity and makes all things new!**

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 5

The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure. 1 Corinthians 10:13 NLT

Have you ever been so tempted to do something that you felt it was inevitable?

Maybe a situation presented itself in such a way that something you knew was wrong felt very right. Or you may have felt such overwhelming temptation that resistance seemed impossible. The truth is we are all going to face temptation, probably every day.

Will we tell the truth when given the chance to lie and make ourselves look better? Will we be honest about the \$20 bill we found on the ground? Will we give into the habit that seems like it will never let us go, or will we seek help? We will all be tempted, but there's good news: **We don't have to give in.**

Today's verse promises that any time we are tempted, **God will provide a way out.** The problem too often is that when faced with temptation we forget to look for God's escape route. The way out may be to call a friend who can keep you accountable. It may be to memorize Bible verses to call to mind in the time of temptation. It may be to get up and walk – or run – out of a tempting situation. The key is to be aware of the way out that God gives you.

Today when you are tempted, stop for a moment and look around. Ask God where the escape route is, then choose to follow it.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 6

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9 NIV

Do people have to tell you things repeatedly? It's as if they don't think you are listening or taking them seriously. It has been said, "Keep the engine oil clean in your cars and they will run forever!" That's great and true advice. When dirt gets in the oil it starts to wear out all the parts. It slows the car down. Soon, it can grind to a halt as it overheats and melts down in the middle of a busy freeway.

We know it's the right thing to do, but sometimes we just don't listen. A case in point: When John the apostle wrote today's verse, he must have understood that many had forgotten this fundamental truth. Maybe you have too.

"Think of this," he says: 1) **Confess and your sins will be forgiven.** 2) **Confess and you will be renewed and made pure before God.** How is all of this possible? Because God is faithful. You can count on him at all times. Because he is just. That means he has every right and the authority to cancel out every debt your sinfulness has cost you, now and forever.

So, if you feel dirty ... **confess.** If you feel worn out ... **confess.** If you feel like you're on the verge of a meltdown on the freeway of life ... **confess.** If you want to experience the blessing and hand of God on your life, **confess.** And God will take care of everything else.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 7

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:35, 37-39 NIV

This challenging, comforting passage assures us of God's profound love for us as his children. And it's a promise for you if you have ever wondered, **"If God loves me, why do I suffer?"**

This text is challenging because it describes our Christian ancestors being persecuted, suffering separation from families, friends, livelihood, homes, possessions – even life itself. Yet Paul comforts them and us, assuring us that **nothing can ever rip us from the loving embrace of God!**

The passage is also challenging because those suffering are identified as God's children: *"For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. ... And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." ... we are children ... heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ ... we share in (Christ's) sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory"* (Romans 8:14-17 NIV). God's loving, intimate relationship to his children is not diminished but strengthened in suffering.

Suffering doesn't mean we are unloved by God or that we have displeased or disappointed him. Remember, Jesus encourages those he loves: *"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33 NIV).

When we see that suffering is part of the human journey with our heavenly Father, we ask, "Can you imagine going through suffering without him?" And we believe his amazing promise: *"We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose"* (Romans 8:28 NIV).

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

A full-page background image of an astronaut in a white spacesuit floating in space. The astronaut is positioned on the left side of the frame, facing right. The background shows the Earth's horizon with a blue sky and white clouds, and a dark, starry space above. The sun is visible in the upper right corner, creating a bright glow and lens flare effects. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

TRANSFORMED IN MY PHYSICAL HEALTH

SESSION 2

SESSION 2

TRANSFORMED IN MY PHYSICAL HEALTH

CHECKING IN

- Which of the seven spiritual health verses from your devotional reading this past week was the most meaningful to you?
- What impact do you think your physical health has on your spiritual health?

MEMORY VERSE

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NIV

**WATCH THE VIDEO LESSON NOW AND FOLLOW ALONG
IN YOUR OUTLINE.**

Transformed in My Physical Health

I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. 3 John 1:2 NIV

God wants us to take care of our bodies, not only because that's where we live, but also because that's where he lives. **Physical health is a spiritual discipline.**

Everything is permissible for me, but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible for me, but I will not be mastered by anything. You say, "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food," but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? ... Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 NIV

What God Says about My Body

- My body is God's _____

You created every part of me; you put me together in my mother's womb ... I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Psalm 139:13-14 TEV/NIV

- God expects me to _____ my body

I will not be mastered by anything. 1 Corinthians 6:12 NIV

- My body will be _____ after I die

By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. 1 Corinthians 6:14 NIV

- My body is connected to the _____

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself?

1 Corinthians 6:15 NIV

Jesus gave his body for you, and he wants you to honor him with yours.

▪ The Holy Spirit _____ my body

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? 1 Corinthians 6:19 NIV

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? ... God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple. 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 NIV

You are God's dwelling place on earth.

For we are the temple of the living God. 2 Corinthians 6:16 NIV

▪ Jesus _____ on the cross

You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NIV

I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God. This is your spiritual act of worship. Romans 12:1 NIV

"Do you want to get well?" John 5:6 NIV

God wants you to be physically healthy so that you can accomplish great things for his kingdom.

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

(PICK AT LEAST ONE OR TWO)

- The Bible says **your body is God's property** and that you are the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. How does that affect the way you see yourself? What do you think you will do differently knowing this fact?

- God expects you to **manage your body**. Why is that so important to God?

- What does it look like to **manage your body**? How good a manager do you think you are?

- Why do you think most Christians tend to put more emphasis on their spirit or mind as opposed to taking care of their bodies?

DAY 8

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NIV

Our culture tells us that your body belongs to you. It is your property to be used however you see fit, as long as you don't hurt anyone else. As a result, our bodies become idols of worship, and we use them to meet our own felt needs for pleasure, happiness, or success. Thus, our culture tells us that our bodies are for the purpose of self-worship.

The Bible radically confronts this kind of thinking about your body. According to God, your body is not your own. It belongs to God. *"You were bought at a price."* He created your body and he has redeemed your body. He paid a high price for your body by sending his only Son to the cross. Jesus had a bodily death and a bodily resurrection so that you might have bodily redemption.

The fact that your body belongs to God has profound implications. As followers of Christ, we reject our cultural belief that our bodies are for self-worship. However, this doesn't mean that we ignore the importance of caring for our bodies. We may not be owners of our bodies, but we are certainly stewards of our bodies. We steward our bodies because they are temples designed to worship God. This means that the primary function of your body is worship. Paul further develops this temple imagery in Romans 12:1 NIV when he says, *"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God. This is your spiritual act of worship."* We are called to offer our bodies to their Owner for his glory and his purpose.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 9

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." 2 Corinthians 12:9a NIV

We all have weaknesses. Paul uses a great metaphor to remind us how fragile we are: "(We) *have this treasure (of the gospel) in jars of clay*" (2 Corinthians 4:7 NIV). Like clay jars, we crack under pressure, experience brokenness, and sometimes fail completely. Unbelievably, there are benefits to weakness.

You know Paul's story. He had a persistent, perplexing problem. He asked God three times to take away his pain. Yet God refused, whispering, "*My grace is all you need, for my power is greatest when you are weak*" (2 Corinthians 12:9 GNT).

So, here are **three promises to keep in mind about weaknesses:**

First, **God's power is present in your weakness.** Don't repeatedly resist or resent your limitations. Paul became the church's greatest scholar and missionary while experiencing his challenges.

Second, **God works through weakness to accomplish his task.** Let physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual weaknesses become part of God's providential plan for your life. Some speculate that Paul's letters may never have been written if he was not doubly limited, both physically challenged and incarcerated.

And finally, **God allows limitations to become blessings in disguise.** Paul goes on to say, "*For when I am weak, then I am strong - the less I have, the more I depend upon him*" (2 Corinthians 12:10 LBT). Paul might never have become a great communicator of the gospel if he had been distracted by other things. **His physical pain made him fully dependent on God.**

Your limitations are opportunities to trust God's promises more and to have a greater dependence on him. **The more insufficient you are, the more sufficient his grace becomes.**

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 10

He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. Isaiah 40:29-31 NIV

Have you ever felt like you've had enough? Have you ever had a day where you felt like you just couldn't go on? Maybe you've been physically worn out by sickness or stress and you've had to make yourself get out of bed in the morning. Or, maybe you've found yourself hopelessly addicted to something and you feel like you'll never have the strength to overcome it. It could be that you struggle with depression or anxiety and every day feels like a chore. **Maybe you've felt like giving up.**

If that's you, read that verse again. Look at the promise it contains: *"But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."*

Four times the verse tells that God will do something for us. Not might, or may, or could or probably will, but **will**. This verse is full of promise for us if we put our hope in the Lord. To hope in the Lord means to trust that God has a plan for your future that will work. **When your situation looks hopeless, you need to put your hope in God and his plan.**

If you are worn out today, put your hope in the Lord. Ask him to renew your strength. Ask him to work out his plan for your future – the plan that will work. And as you do, he promises to give you the physical strength to rise above the things that are holding you down.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 11

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

Great people used by God are just ordinary people with an extraordinary amount of determination. They simply don't know how to give up when the going gets tough. Where do they find this kind of inner strength? Their strength comes from a deep-rooted belief that *"I can do all things through Christ."* Their faith propels them past discouragement and fear into the life God wants them to live – a life completely reliant on God's power, not their own.

What does it take to discourage you in your commitment to physical health? Is it when things don't go your way? How about not reaching your goals? Maybe it's not having the strength to see things through to completion. We often get discouraged because we are doing life on our own power. Our strength and energy have limitations. Our emotional and mental resolve can only last so long. Willpower can only take you so far before it runs out. But God's power is limitless; always available when you need it. There's only one little catch: This power is not automatic. It requires an act of faith called surrender.

To be infused with God's strength, you must first acknowledge your limitations. You must admit to God that you need him. Total surrender means complete dependence on him day by day, moment by moment. Just like a newly born baby is completely dependent on her mother for everything, **God wants you to be completely dependent on him for all your needs.**

Once you have surrendered and admitted your need, you must ask God for his strength and trust him to deliver. God will not give you all the energy you're going to need for an entire year all at once, but he will give you energy for tomorrow when you get there.

When you feel like you're running on empty and ready to throw in the towel, tap into God's power source. Move past discouragement and step out in faith, trusting God to give you all you need for that day.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 12

God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.
2 Timothy 1:7 NLT

Self-discipline doesn't come from yourself. It comes from God. We all go through moments of doubt, when the things we know are true and believe in seem to leave us with more questions than answers. There are times in our lives when we get afraid. There are times when we look at the future and are filled with worry. Sometimes we look at a sticky situation and we don't know how we are going to get through it.

But there is a way. When you and I feel powerless over our situations, when we feel afraid of what lies ahead, when our "stick-to-it-iveness" no longer sticks, God is able and willing to give us the power we lack. The courage to face a fear head on doesn't come from within, it comes from God above.

The ability to keep going when times get hard comes from trusting in God, not in ourselves. The power to keep up a new habit like dieting or exercise, or to break a bad habit or addiction, doesn't come from you and me gutting it out, but from turning to God and asking him for the power to see our convictions through.

If you are going through a tough time today, if you see something in the future that scares you, if there is something on the horizon that is uncertain, **turn to Jesus and ask him for the power to have faith.** Ask him to give you courage. Ask him to give you the boldness to face your fears. If you are striving to start a good habit, or break a bad one, ask him for self-discipline to see it through.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 13

Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones. Proverbs 3:7-8 NIV

The fear of the Lord is a repeated theme throughout the book of Proverbs. We read in Proverbs 9:10 NIV, *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."* Reverence and respect for God are the beginning of wisdom. If you think that somehow you're going to develop wisdom for life's decisions without the fear of the Lord, you're just fooling yourself.

What does it mean to fear God? To fear God means you love what he loves and hate what he hates. It means you appreciate who he is and you do what he says. To fear God means you ask for his advice and don't just depend on yourself. To fear God is to treat him with reverence, respect, and awe.

The other option is to be *"wise in your own eyes."* This means that rather than depending upon God, revering and respecting him, you rely upon yourself. It means that you think you know best. Ultimately, this is pride. It is the belief that you are God. Proverbs tells us that this kind of thinking is foolishness.

What this means is that all endeavors must begin with a fear of the Lord rather than trusting in your own wits and resources. In all of life's decisions and actions you must start with God. What does this mean practically? If you desire physical health, start with God rather than your own wisdom. Start by trusting in, listening to, and depending upon God for guidance in your pursuit of physical health. Don't begin with your own strategy and resolve. **Begin with God.**

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 14

I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:6 ESV

Don't give up!

I'm pretty sure that most of us have tried to go on a diet from time to time—and have failed horribly! The first day goes pretty well—up until lunch time! Then, you begin to have second thoughts. Your brain starts talking to you and it can make a pretty convincing argument as to why you deserve to quit your diet and “go ahead and eat heartily!”

“You've been working pretty hard! You've got to eat to keep your strength up!”

“Look at that beautiful meal! Someone went to a lot of trouble. Don't offend them! Eat up!”

“You deserve this treat! People don't realize just how much you do around here. Live a little!”

It's easy to give up in life. And it's easy to give ourselves a good reason to quit.

We start off in the Christian life with the best of intentions. We say, “I can do this!”

That's the first mistake. The passage above tells me that it is God who needs to be at work in me. So... let God work in you!

Next, we throw ourselves into the Christian life with an inhuman fervor. “I can do this if I try hard enough!” Nope, wrong again. Our confidence must come from knowing that it's God who is putting forth all the effort. So... put all your trust in him.

Then, we tell ourselves, “I'm going to make it ... I'm going to make it ...” Pretty soon, we are right back where we started and wondering what went wrong. Well, we forgot that it's God who will complete your life in such a way that you will stand victoriously before the throne one day. **So... give control of your life to God today.**

Whether it's your diet, your family, or breaking a bad habit, don't quit. **God will never give up on you!** If God starts something, he never stops until his work is perfectly complete. And that means you!

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

A large rocket launch is shown against a clear blue sky. The rocket is white with orange and black sections. It is being lifted by a large crane structure. Bright flames and smoke are visible at the base of the rocket. The text "TRANSFORMED IN MY MENTAL HEALTH" is overlaid in the center of the image.

TRANSFORMED IN MY MENTAL HEALTH

SESSION 3

SESSION 3

TRANSFORMED IN MY MENTAL HEALTH

CHECKING IN

- Which of the seven physical health verses from your devotional reading this past week was **the more meaningful to you**?
- What role do you think the mind plays in our growth as followers of Christ?

MEMORY VERSE

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing, and perfect will. Romans 12:2 NIV

**WATCH THE VIDEO LESSON NOW AND FOLLOW ALONG
IN YOUR OUTLINE.**

TRANSFORMED IN MY MENTAL HEALTH

WHATEVER GETS YOUR MIND GETS YOU.

Though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 1 Corinthians 10:3-5 NIV

TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR MIND...

- Don't believe everything you _____

You and I have an amazing ability to lie to ourselves. We do it all the time.

The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? Jeremiah 17:9 NIV

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. 2 Corinthians 13:5 NIV

- Guard your mind against _____

A wise person is hungry for knowledge, while the fool feeds on trash. Proverbs 15:14 NLT

There are three types of brain food: toxic food, junk food, and healthy food.

I will not set before my eyes anything that is worthless. Psalm 101:3 ESV

- Never let up on _____

Intelligent people are always ready to learn. Their ears are open for knowledge. Proverbs 18:15 NLT

Wise people store up knowledge. Proverbs 10:14 NKJV

There are two ways to store up knowledge: reading and relationships. Your life will be

largely influenced by the books you read and the people you meet.

Those who get wisdom do themselves a favor, and those who love learning will succeed.
Proverbs 19:8 NCV

It's wise to learn from experience. It's wiser to learn from the experiences of others – and it's a lot less painful.

- Renew your mind daily with _____

Change doesn't start in your behavior. It starts in your thoughts.

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. Romans 12:2 NLT

You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!
Isaiah 26:3 NLT

- Let God stretch your _____

Now glory be to God, who by his mighty power at work within us is able to do far more than we would ever dare to ask or even dream of – infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, or hopes. May he be given glory forever. Ephesians 3:20-21 TLB

Nothing happens until somebody starts dreaming. God cannot help you reach your goals if you don't have any goals. He cannot fulfill your dreams if you don't have any dreams. He cannot exceed your expectations if you don't have any expectations.

Where there is no vision, the people perish. Proverbs 29:18 KJV

God wants you to dream big dreams so you can accomplish great things for his glory.

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS (PICK AT LEAST ONE OR TWO)

- Why is it so easy to lie to ourselves?

- There's **toxic food, junk food,** and **healthy food** for your brain. What could you do to give your brain a healthier diet?

- What specific **topics** and **habits** do you want to learn about through your reading and relationships?

- The Bible says, "*You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!*" (Isaiah 26:3 NLT). What helps you to **fix your thoughts on God?**

DAY 15

You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. Isaiah 26:3 NKJV

Do you have **perfect peace** today? I know some days my mind has a mind of its own, and it is anything but peaceful. I can't seem to think clearly about anything. I think about things that **could** happen. I fret over the consequences of what **has** happened. My imagination runs wild with all kinds of negative possibilities. And no matter what I do, I can't seem to bring my thoughts under control. I don't have the "perfect peace" of God. Sound familiar?

The Bible gives the reason for this condition. We don't have perfect peace because our minds are not "stayed" on God. The Hebrew word for "mind" in this verse is not referring to the logical, rational, problem-solving part of the mind. Instead, it is the word for imagination. It's our imagination that causes us to lose our peace.

The only way to fix it is to fix your mind on God. Get hold of your imagination, grab it by the scruff of the neck, and bring it to God. The Bible says, *"Take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ"* (2 Corinthians 10:5 NIV). Bring your worries to him in prayer, then change the focus of your attention. Think about God. Lean into God, hold onto him, and put your trust in him. When you do, he will give you peace of mind. And when you have peace of mind, then the logical, rational, problem-solving part of your mind will be able to think clearly.

When you fix your mind on God, God fixes your mind.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 16

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7
NIV

God wants you to be totally free from anxiety. He wants you to live without fear. He wants you to experience his peace *“at all times and in every situation”* (2 Thessalonians 3:16 NLT). God knows that fear and anxiety keep us from living out his purposes for our lives. So he lovingly tells us, *“Don’t be anxious about anything.”* Anything! Sometimes that’s easier said than done.

What is the antidote to anxiety? This verse tells us to pray *“with thanksgiving.”* So start with a heart of gratitude. Thank God for his faithfulness and that he has never left your side. Thank him for his unchanging love for you, for his forgiveness and grace. Thank him in advance for what he is going to do!

Next tell God what’s troubling you. Most people pray prayers they think God wants to hear. But God tells us to pray about everything, leaving nothing on the table, and giving it all to him. **If it’s big enough to worry about, it’s big enough to pray about.**

The result of faithfully bringing your requests to God – with thanksgiving – and trusting him with the outcome is that you will experience *“the peace of God which transcends all understanding.”* God’s peace is so powerful the Bible says it will even *“guard your heart and mind”* from the anxieties of this world.

When you give your anxieties to God – your worries of the future, the guilt of your past, your hurts, heartbreaks and struggles – God in return will give you his peace, which is more powerful than any anxiety or problem. His peace will stand guard over your heart and mind like an army protecting a city, watching and keeping you safe from the outside forces that would steal away your joy.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 17

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me – put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. Philippians 4:8-9 NIV

You are what you think about. Proverbs 23:7 NKJV tells us, *“For as a (man) thinks in his heart, so is he.”*

You’ve probably heard the phrase about computer processing, “garbage in, garbage out.” The same is true with your mind. Put garbage in—the types of movies you watch, the internet sites you visit, the music you listen to, the magazines you browse, the books you read—and the output of your life will be garbage too.

So how can you keep the “garbage” out of your mind? You can’t just empty your mind of bad thoughts. You must deliberately replace them with something else. Vacuums do not exist naturally in the world; they are artificially created. If you create a vacuum, something fills it. For instance, your gas tank is never empty; it’s either filled with gas or with air. The gas replaces the air, the air replaces the gas. Something will always fill a void. Our minds will always be filled with something, but we get to choose what fills them. **So what types of thoughts do you fill your mind with?**

Here’s God’s list: *“Whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.”* The result is God’s peace in your heart. The bottom line is that if a thought doesn’t pass this test, don’t allow it in your mind. That’s easier said than done, which is why the end of the verse says, “put it into practice.” God gave you a filter that brings peace of mind. **Practice using it every day!**

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 18

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:2 NIV

Real transformation starts in your mind, not your behavior. You cannot change your character simply by changing your actions. Rather, you change your actions by changing your character. And it all begins with changing the way you think. That's why the Bible says don't conform to the ways of the world, "*but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*"

What is the difference between conforming and transforming? To conform something is to change its outward appearance by fitting it into a mold. To transform something is to change its nature. Conforming has to do with behavior. Transforming has to do with character. The Bible is telling us to stop trying to fit in with the ways of the world, but instead allow God to transform our character into the character of Christ.

Notice that conforming is something you do to yourself – you consciously try to fit in or become like everyone else. **But transforming is something that God does to you.** It is God's work in your life, renewing your mind by his grace, through his Word.

God doesn't just want to change what you think. He wants to change how you think – your way of thinking, The Bible says, "*Be made new in the attitude of your mind*" (Ephesians 4:23 NIV).

Then look at the result of the transformed mind. **God promises that you will be able to discover his will for your life.** Not only will you discover his will, but you will find that it is good, pleasing, and perfect—tailor made for you.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 19

We have the mind of Christ. 1 Corinthians 2:16 NIV

What does it mean to have the mind of Christ? How can we possibly learn to think like he does? If you want to know how Jesus thinks, then you have to know what Jesus has already said. That's why it is so important to us to be people of the Word. If you want to think like Christ, then you have to know the Word of Christ.

You've often heard the popular question, "What would Jesus do?" If you truly want to know what Jesus would do in your situation, then you need to know what he has already said about similar situations. What has Jesus already said about ethics, morality, business, relationships, and money? If you know what he has said, you'll have a pretty good idea of how he thinks and what he would do in your situation. The Bible says, "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever*" (Hebrews 13:8 NIV).

The mind of Christ is revealed in the Word of Christ by the Spirit of Christ. The Bible makes it clear that it is the Holy Spirit who makes God's Word understandable to us (see 1 Corinthians 2:9-16). The Holy Spirit is the one who teaches us and enables us to think with the mind of Christ. And he does it by "*expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words*" (v. 13).

You already have the mind of Christ because you have the Spirit of Christ—the Holy Spirit—living in you. **The more you get into the Word of Christ, the more the Spirit of Christ will teach you to think with the mind of Christ.**

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 20

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. James 1:5 NIV

Do you need wisdom today? God has made an amazing offer that you cannot afford to pass up. He says, *"Ask me, and I will give you the wisdom you need."* So ask ... but be prepared to act on what he tells you. **God doesn't offer his wisdom as an opinion to be considered at your convenience.** God is not a member of your advisory committee. He is your Lord. His wisdom is truth. **You must act on his wisdom if you want him to give you more.**

You must come to God with a predisposition to obey. Don't ask him what he wants you to do and then decide to say yes. Start with yes, and then he will tell you what to do. If you're asking God for wisdom but heaven seems silent, then you need to ask yourself, "Am I living by the wisdom God has already given me? Have I been guilty of selective obedience?" After all, why should God tell you something if you are ignoring what he has already told you?

God gives wisdom graciously, *"without finding fault."* God will not scold you or make you feel stupid for asking. He wants to give you wisdom because he loves you and wants what is best for you. But he wants you to ask in faith. James goes on to say, *"But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt," and not be double-minded* (vv. 6-8). You must ask God for wisdom, believing that he has the wisdom you are looking for. And you must ask with single-minded determination to live by the wisdom he gives you.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 21

Those who get wisdom do themselves a favor, and those who love learning will succeed.
Proverbs 19:8 NCV

Wisdom is really not that hard to find, but it can be hard to look for. It all comes down to the choices we make about how we spend our time. We can spend our time wisely and get more wisdom, or we can spend our time foolishly and miss opportunities to grow. Sometimes it's a difficult choice.

Here's a practical suggestion. Trade one hour of gaming or television for one hour of reading every day. Expand your mind by expanding your interests. Use your time wisely and you will be rewarded.

God wants to fill your mind with wisdom, but he won't force it upon you. You must seek it out. The Bible says, "*Blessed are those who find wisdom*"—that means you have to look for it—"*those who gain understanding*"—that means you have to work for it and actively pursue it (Proverbs 3:13 NIV).

What I love about wisdom is that, once found, it can never be lost. In fact, the more wisdom you give away, the more it becomes yours.

So do yourself a favor today. Get some wisdom. And if you will do that, the Bible promises you will succeed.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

TRANSFORMED IN MY EMOTIONAL HEALTH

SESSION 4



SESSION 4

TRANSFORMED IN MY EMOTIONAL HEALTH

CHECKING IN

- Which of the seven mental health verses from your devotional reading this past week **was the most meaningful to you?**
- When you hurt yourself (stub your toe, whack your thumb with a hammer, etc.), do you tend to stuff it, yell at it, cry about it, or dance around?

MEMORY VERSE

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28 NIV

**WATCH THE VIDEO LESSON NOW AND FOLLOW ALONG
IN YOUR OUTLINE.**

TRANSFORMED IN MY EMOTIONAL HEALTH

He heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds. Psalm 147:3 NLT

FIVE STEPS TOWARD EMOTIONAL HEALTH

- _____ my _____

You'll never be emotionally healthy until you face your feelings straight on.

I kept very quiet... but I became even more upset. I became very angry inside, and as I thought about it, my anger burned. Psalm 39:2-3 NCV

Holding on to hurts is like carrying hot coals in your heart – you're the one who's going to get burned. When you swallow your hurt, your stomach keeps score.

You must be honest with yourself, honest with God, and honest with one other person.

When I kept things to myself, I felt weak deep inside me. I moaned all day long. Psalm 32:3 NCV

- _____ those who have _____

One of the most difficult decisions you'll make in life is this: "Do I want to get well or do I want to get even?"

It was while we were still sinners that Christ died for us! Romans 5:8 TEV

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Ephesians 4:31-32 NIV

You have kept a record of my tears. Psalm 56:8 TEV

Never pay back evil for evil ... never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God, for he has said that he will repay those who deserve it. Don't take the law into your own hands. Romans 12:17-19 TLB

- Replace _____ with _____

Let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Romans 12:2 NLT

Jesus, who makes people holy, and all those who are made holy have the same Father. That is why Jesus isn't ashamed to call them brothers and sisters. Hebrews 2:11 GWT

If you want to change the way you feel about your life, you must change the way you think about your life. Replace old lies with God's truths.

- _____ on the _____

Put your heart right ... Reach out to God ... face the world again, firm and courageous. Then all your troubles will fade from your memory, like floods that are past and remembered no more. Job 11:13-16 TEV

Your past is not your future. The old you is not the new you.

Look straight ahead with honest confidence; don't hang your head in shame. Proverbs 4:25 TEV

- _____ to help _____

God wants to redeem your pain. He wants to use your experiences to help other people. That's what ministry is all about.

(God) comforts us every time we have trouble, so when others have trouble, we can comfort them with the same comfort God gives us. 2 Corinthians 1:4 NCV

When someone becomes a Christian, he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same anymore. A new life has begun! 2 Corinthians 5:17 TLB

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

(PICK AT LEAST ONE OR TWO)

• **God never wastes a hurt.** Your greatest ministry will come from your deepest pain. Would anyone like to share a personal story of how God brought emotional healing into your life? This is great practice for sharing your faith with a non-believing friend.

• The Bible says, *"When I kept things to myself, I felt weak deep inside me. I moaned all day long"* (Psalm 32:3 NCV). Why do you think we would rather hide the things that have happened to us instead of revealing them to someone?

• Why is it so hard to forgive when we have been wronged? What happens if we choose not to forgive? What could happen if we do forgive?

• The Bible says, *"Be made new in the attitude of your minds"* (Ephesians 4:23 NIV). If you want to change the way you feel about your life, you have to change the way you think about your life. What is one thought you need to change about yourself?

DAY 22

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30 NIV

In the Bible, people came to Jesus for many reasons. Some came to be healed. Others needed advice. Many came for eternal life. Jesus gives you another reason to come to him: rest from your burdens. But here’s the catch Once you have come to Jesus with your burdens, you must give up control. Jesus says, *“Take my yoke upon you.”*

A yoke is a farming tool. Farmers yoke their plow-horses together to keep them going in the same direction and at the same pace. When they are yoked together, one cannot go faster than the other, or slower for that matter. They are less prone to veer off the path when they are working together. When their burden is cut in half, they can accomplish twice as much.

Jesus is using a yoke as a symbol of partnership with him. God never intended for you to bear your burdens alone. **Jesus is saying, “I will help carry the load, you don’t have to do it alone anymore. When you’re weary and worn out, emotionally exhausted, let me carry your burden with you.”**

Jesus’ invitation is, *“Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”* The secret to overcoming an overloaded life is to go to the only One who can truly give you rest for your soul. Jesus is your burden bearer, your model for stress-free living. Accept his invitation today and find the rest you have been searching for.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 23

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. John 14:27 NIV

Someone has calculated that there have been 286 years of peace in the last 3,500 years of human history. That's a horrible track record. The peace of the world is fleeting and fragile.

Where conflict reigns, fear also rules. Fear and hatred are profound influences on you and me. Scientists speculate that prolonged fear, hatred, conflict, and unforgiveness actually alter our DNA. When peace is missing, we are fragmented and flawed.

God's promise is forever-peace. In his last days on earth, Jesus comforted his anxious disciples: *"I leave with you peace. I give you my own peace, and my gift is nothing like the peace of this world. You must not be distressed and you must not be daunted"* (PH). The Master knew that his disciples were anxiously grappling with twin realities: Touching and talking to him was ending, and his death seemed imminent. Jesus provided forever-peace to return emotional stability to his faltering disciples.

But just what is forever-peace? According to Scripture ...

- God's peace is a gift. You don't work for it, earn it, psyche yourself up for it, or try really hard to get it. You just accept it.

- God's peace does not depend on circumstances. His peace is present in terrible, terrifying, tortuous times. Know why?

- God's peace, *shalom* in Jesus' language, means more than the absence of conflict, it's the presence of all things good!

The bottom line is that God's promise of forever-peace is fulfilled by his forever-presence! So *"do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."* Don't focus on the absence of peace; focus on the presence of God, and his peace will come to you.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 24

The Lord is my Shepherd ... 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. Psalm 23:1, 4 NIV

God will always be with you. You will never have to go through life alone. You won't have any experience that God does not see. He is walking right beside you, even when you walk "*through the valley of the shadow of death.*" The difference for those who follow Christ is not the absence of the shadow of death but the presence of the Shepherd. In fact, because of the Shepherd, death is now just a shadow of its former self. Not even death can separate you from God's love. In every situation, God is there.

When the Shepherd walks with you he carries a rod, just in case you need a little prodding to keep moving. The purpose of the rod is not to hurt the sheep but to lead the sheep. Sometimes we need a good poke! God uses his rod to let you know, "You can do it! Don't quit! Don't stop or give up! I am right here with you!"

The Shepherd also carries his staff as he walks with you. He uses his staff to protect you from your enemy. Our Shepherd can easily deal with any threat by his mighty power. So you do not have to fear evil.

You are not alone. God is with you. He'll get you through life. And he'll get you through death. He'll bring you home safely. And you will dwell in the house of the Lord, forever.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 25

The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. Deuteronomy 33:27 NIV

Most of us like a hug when we are feeling down. The problem is, there's not always someone there to give us one when we want it. We know this for sure, there will be tough times. There will be circumstances beyond your control, and crises that come out of nowhere. The pain will seem greater than you can bear. It's then, when things look impossible, that you must remember to run to your heavenly Father. He will be there. He is always there.

God sees our pain. He hears your cry. He counts every tear you shed. He stands ready to help. You just need to come to him. He is your shelter in the storm. His everlasting arms are strong and waiting to embrace you. In them you will find peace, protection, and strength. And when you allow him to hold you close, to wrap his arms around you, he will be with you until the storm passes and joy comes in the morning.

It's hard to imagine that the God who created the universe wants to be there for you, but he does. **His greatest desire is to draw you close to him.** This is why he created you. So when you're feeling like no one cares, and your thoughts lead you into a pit of despair, call on the Lord to pull you out. His loving kindness never fails. He wants nothing more than to give you that hug you need.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 26

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Romans 8:1
NIV

Imagine that I asked you to write down all of the bad things you have ever done on a 3x5 card. Don't worry, I'm not going to ask you to do that. Besides, if you're at all like me, a 2x5 card wouldn't be nearly enough room for all of that stuff! But just imagine that I did. Now, picture putting that card with every sin, every careless word, every stupid mistake, everything you feel guilty about, inside of a hardback book. Now, close the book.

Can you still see the card? No. It's still there, but you can't see it. It's inside something bigger, something better. That card is still there, but it is in something else. That's what it's like to be in Christ Jesus. It means that once we put our faith in Christ, once we ask him to forgive us for our sins, God simply doesn't see them anymore. We are declared not guilty. Not because we didn't do the things on that card but because he chooses to see Jesus instead of our mistakes.

You may be carrying something around that you feel terribly guilty about. You may feel like this guilt comes from God to remind you, or punish you, for what you have done. But that is simply not the case. Jesus forgives us of our sins and takes them from us. When Jesus went to the cross he paid the price for your sins, once and for all. You don't have to keep paying for your sins through guilt. You don't have to carry them around anymore. You don't have to live with shame anymore.

If you are in Christ, you are forgiven.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 27

The joy of the Lord is your strength. Nehemiah 8:10 NIV

The secret of strength is joy. It's not your desire or your determination that are your strength. It's your joy. This means that one of the main reasons you feel you can't do something or don't have the strength to face something is a lack of joy. When you have joy, then you are able to find security in the truth that God has a plan, and you have strength for that day.

Joy gives you strength for life's greatest challenges. Mother Teresa's job description for working with the sick from the streets of Calcutta was two simple items: desire to work hard and have a joyful attitude. When you work hard but have no joy, you'll find yourself feeling worn down by life; emotionally, physically, and spiritually exhausted.

How do you experience joy? The Westminster Catechism states, "The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever." Eternity is going to be filled with the sound of human laughter, people enjoying God. You don't have to wait to get in on that party, you can choose today to enjoy the goodness and greatness of God.

Nehemiah tells us that it's the "*joy of the Lord*" that we are choosing. Joy is not a matter of trying to work up good feelings about yourself or the world around you. Sometimes there's little to feel good about there. True joy centers on God. The joy that God gives starts by focusing on who God is.

Whatever circumstance you are facing right now, spend a few moments thinking about who God is. **Think about his grace, power, forgiveness, and patience. Think about his comfort and love.** Let the joy that flows from remembering who God is become your strength for what you are facing today.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 28

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty, I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." Psalm 91:1-2 NIV

I love New York City. It is a huge and important world center where the nations come to meet and exchange ideas and share their cultures. And what a humbling place it is! You are surrounded by monolithic buildings that are at once both beautifully iconic and gigantic in stature. As you walk through the streets of downtown, even in the daytime, you are engulfed by the shadows of those gargantuan skyscrapers that blot out the sun. The city is enormous in every way,

God is just like that city.

The Scripture above says that you can dwell in him. He is a whole life for you. You find food and sustenance and love and beauty and truth in Him. He is a city unto himself. **Dwell in him.**

He shelters you. He can protect you from whatever life throws at you. He is so big and absolutely sovereign that nothing can touch you except what he allows. And he only allows exactly what is right for you. **Hide in him.**

He is so big that you can't go anywhere that he is not in control. His shadow is so vast that it falls on everything, everywhere, and everyone on the earth. No matter where you find yourself in this world and no matter what condition you are in, you can always rest in his shadow and find the help you need. **Rest in him.**

God is unbeatably strong, preeminently vast, and unstoppable powerful. He truly is a fortress and our refuge. **Trust in him.**

If life is getting you down, go to the City of the King and take refuge in his greatness, rest in his shadow, and rely upon him to see you through. **He will never fail you.**

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

A full-page background image of an astronaut in a white spacesuit standing on the lunar surface. The astronaut is wearing a helmet with a reflective visor and has an American flag patch on the right shoulder. The lunar surface is dark and rocky, with a long shadow cast by the astronaut. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

TRANSFORMED IN MY RELATIONAL HEALTH

SESSION 5

SESSION 5

TRANSFORMED IN MY RELATIONAL HEALTH

CHECKING IN

- Which of the seven emotional health verses from your devotional reading this past week was **the most meaningful to you**?
- When it comes to personal conflict, are you a skunk or a turtle? Turtles withdraw quietly into their shells until the trouble is past. When skunks are in conflict, they let everybody know about it.

MEMORY VERSE

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. 1 Peter 4:8 NIV

**WATCH THE VIDEO LESSON NOW AND FOLLOW ALONG
IN YOUR OUTLINE.**

TRANSFORMED IN MY RELATIONAL HEALTH

TWO KINDS OF FRIENDS

- _____ friends are the result of _____
- _____ friends are the result of _____

A mirror reflects a man's face, but what he is really like is shown by the kind of friends he chooses. Proverbs 27:19 TLB

The righteous choose their friends carefully. Proverbs 12:26 NIV

FIVE KINDS OF PEOPLE TO AVOID AS CLOSE FRIENDS

- _____ people

Our friends, we command you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to keep away from all believers who are living a lazy life... 2 Thessalonians 3:6 TEV

- _____ people

Don't make friends with people who have hot, violent tempers. You might learn their habits and not be able to change. Proverbs 22;24-25 TEV

- _____ people

When I wrote to you before, I told you not to associate with people who indulge in sexual sin. But I wasn't talking about unbelievers who indulge in sexual sin, or are greedy, or cheat people, or worship idols. You would have to leave this world to avoid people like that. I meant that you are not to associate with anyone who claims to be a believer yet indulges in sexual sin, or is greedy, or worships idols, or is abusive, or is a drunkard, or cheats people. Don't even eat with such people. 1 Corinthians 5:9-11 NLT

- _____ people

Do not eat the food of a stingy man ... for he is the kind of person who is always thinking about the cost. "Eat and drink," he says to you, but his heart is not with you. Proverbs 23:6-7 NIV

- _____ people

Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. 2 Corinthians 6:14a NLT

CHOOSE CLOSE FRIENDS WHO WILL...

- _____ me mentally

He who walks with the wise grows wise. Proverbs 13:20a NIV

As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. Proverbs 27:17 NIV

- _____ me emotionally

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. Proverbs 17:17 NIV

Bear one another's burdens. Galatians 6:2 NKJV

- _____ me spiritually

Encourage one another and build each other up. 1 Thessalonians 5:11 NIV

Spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Hebrews 10:24 NIV

How can I attract that kind of friend? By being that kind of friend.

HOW TO BUILD HEALTHY FRIENDSHIPS

- Get interested in _____

Unfriendly people care only about themselves. Proverbs 18:1 NLT

Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Philippians 2:4 NKJV

- Don't be a _____

Do everything without complaining and arguing, so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people. Philippians 2:14-15 NLT

- Be a _____

Be quick to listen and slow to speak. James 1:19 CEV

Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out. Proverbs 20:5 KJV

- Accept people _____

Accept one another... just as Christ accepted you. Romans 15:7 NIV

A friend loves at all times. Proverbs 17:17a NIV

- Help people _____

Honor one another above yourselves. Romans 12:10 NIV

Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Philippians 2:3 NLT

- Be _____.

Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Romans 12:15 NKJV

- Stick with them in _____

There are "friends" who pretend to be friends, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. Proverbs 18:24 TLB

Two are better than one because ... if one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 NIV

- Share _____ with them

"Go back home and tell everyone how much God has done for you." The man then went all over town, telling everything that Jesus had done for him. Luke 8:39 CEV

Do to others as you would have them do to you. Luke 6:31 NIV

I do not call you servants any longer... Instead, I call you friends. John 15:15 TEV

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

(PICK AT LEAST ONE OR TWO)

- The Bible says, “*Spur one another on toward love and good deeds*” (Hebrews 10:24 NIV). We all need spiritual encouragers in our lives. Who is a spiritual encourager to you? What are some ways they encourage you?

- Review the three qualities of a close friend: people who challenge you mentally, support you emotionally, and strengthen you spiritually. Remember, to find that kind of friend, you need to be that kind of friend. Which of these characteristics do you need to develop in your own life?

- Which of the eight ways to build healthy friendships is the most important to you and why?

DAY 29

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. John 15:5 NIV

Jesus' invitation to remain in him is at the very heart of his gospel. **As a branch depends upon a vine to bear fruit, so likewise we must depend upon Jesus to bear fruit in our lives.**

It is only by abiding in relational intimacy with Jesus that we can hope to bear the fruit of the Spirit in our relationships with others.

Jesus emphatically makes this point when he says, *"If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear **much** fruit; apart from me you can do **nothing**."* Notice the strong language. If we abide in loving relationship with him, we will produce "a little fruit"? No, we will produce "much fruit." We will flourish. On the other hand, if we do not abide in him, we can still do "something"? No, we can do "nothing." In fact, in the Greek this sentence is a double negative and so it really can be read, "you can do nothing, really nothing." Jesus wants to make sure we get his point loud and clear.

The only way to bear fruit is to abide in relationship with Jesus. If we want to be the kind of people who love, who are patient, who are kind, who are gentle, who are self-controlled (Galatians 5:22-23), we must remain in him. Bearing fruit is not a result of our resolve or determination. It is the result of abiding in a dependent relationship with Jesus by the Holy Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is just that, the fruit of the Spirit. It is a result of God's transforming power, not our willpower. It is produced by the Holy Spirit who now makes our heart his home.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 30

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Matthew 5:7 NIV

Thank God for his mercy! In our brokenness and sin, we certainly need it. He has shown us mercy at the cross by taking upon himself the very punishment we deserved. The Holy Spirit continues to pour out his life giving, life sustaining mercy in our lives. Like a cascading fountain, *"His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning"* (Lamentations 3:22-23 ESV).

God calls us to drink deeply of his overflowing mercy. He calls us to return to the fountain day after day that we might become intimately acquainted with his mercy. As those who personally know the mercy of God, we are to be people of mercy ourselves. As those who have been blessed with the mercy of God, we are to bless others with the same grace, patience, and care that we have received from him. We are not called to dole out judgment or give people what they deserve, but instead to be gracious and merciful.

Do you want to be a person of mercy? If you drink deeply from God's fountain of mercy, then the mercy of God will overflow in your life. If you are aware of how much you need God's mercy, your heart will be softened toward others in need of mercy. **Jesus' mercy toward sinners and social outcasts was a radical display of God's love in the culture of his day.** It's just as powerful – and unexpected – in our culture of self-centeredness and judgment today. As we extend mercy, grace, compassion, and forgiveness to the forgotten, the marginalized, and the rejected, we will point people to the mercy of Jesus.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 31

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Matthew 5:9 NIV

What does it mean to be blessed? The word for blessing in Greek is "Makarios," which can more literally be translated "happy." So, Jesus tells us, "Happy are the peacemakers." He does not say, "Happy are the peace lovers." Everybody loves peace, Nor does he say, "Happy are the peaceable," those who never get disturbed by anything. Rather, he tells us "happy" are those who make peace – who actively seek to resolve conflict.

What kind of happiness are we talking about here? Does Jesus mean that all the circumstances of our lives will work out the way we want them to? No, that's not the point. Jesus does not mean that we will always "feel" happy based on our current life circumstances, but rather that we are in a position of happiness because we have a relationship with God. **To be happy is to be at peace with God.**

God is a peacemaker. In fact, he is The Peacemaker. Through the cross of Jesus Christ, God has made peace with us who warred with him in our sin. We were once enemies of God and now we are called children of God (Colossians 1:21). We must delight in the peace we have with The Peacemaker. It is a peace found deep within our souls, a peace that passes human understanding. To be at peace with God means we have been reconciled to a right relationship with him.

God calls us to follow his lead. He calls us to share the very peace we have found in him with the rest of the world. He wants us to be known as peacemakers. He wants us to reflect his redeeming and reconciling love to the world around us. For only his children truly know what real peace, ultimate peace, life-giving peace, is all about. In a world of conflict, strife, and revenge, we can be a profound witness of The Peacemaker by being peacemakers ourselves.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 32

But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Luke 6:35 NIV

Love your enemies. If ever we missed the radical nature of Jesus' message, here it is, loud and clear. **Jesus calls us to love those who do not love us.** To love those who have wounded us. To love those who slander our name or gossip about us. Just a few verses prior to this, Jesus says, *"Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you"* (Luke 6:27-28 NIV). If this isn't radical living, I don't know what is.

We get a clear picture of this radical kind of love in Jesus' life. As he hung upon the cross, wounded, mocked and ridiculed, Jesus cried out, *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing"* (Luke 23:34 NIV). **In the midst of his pain and suffering, Jesus extended love to his enemies.** He prayed for their forgiveness. Not only does this scene give us a model for loving our enemies, but it reminds us of the profound truth of God's love for us. As Scripture tells us, it was while we were enemies of God ourselves that Christ Jesus died for us so that we could be reconciled to God (Romans 5:10). In a very real sense, Jesus' prayer for forgiveness extends to us, for in our sin we stand with his accusers, persecutors, and mockers.

We know we do not merit God's favor and yet he has freely and fully poured out his love and grace upon us. It is this kind of love that transforms our hearts and makes us more like Jesus, so that we can display his radical love even to our enemies, or perhaps, especially to them.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 33

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. 1 Peter 4:8 NIV

Love is all you need. That's pretty simple isn't it?

The grammar in this passage is very interesting here. Now, don't tune out just because you heard the word "grammar." Listen to this: It is just as acceptable in the original language for the verse to be read one of two different ways.

You could say, "When I truly love you in a deep way, I will forgive you completely and tenderly." Or you could say, "When I love you deeply, God himself will forgive my multitude of sins."

Either way, love is all you need. This means that I have been called upon by God to love you in such a way that I quickly drop any offense I might have toward you. I live a life of love and accept you, warts and all, just as Jesus accepts you – and how he has accepted me too for that matter. It also means that when I learn to love you in this way, God exercises his forgiveness toward me and I live a life that is filled with grace, acceptance, and the favor of God. Love is all you need!

So how do I do it? Here are some ways to love from 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. (Go see for yourself.)

Be patient with someone today who is a little slower than you when it comes to "getting it."

Be kind to someone who needs a little extra help – offer it to them without their having to beg you for it.

Don't boast about yourself today. Find someone else to be proud of and let them know it!

Don't get angry. Stay cool. Take a deep breath and carefully explain your feelings by building a bridge into someone else's life, rather than a wall.

Be protective. Stand up for someone who could use a little extra strength to turn their circumstances around.

Don't give up on anyone. Keep the faith. Hang in there. Renew your hope. Persevere in your love for them.

Love is all you need. So now do it! Love someone else today and you will be graciously loved by God.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 34

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. Psalm 147:3 NIV

Sticks and stones may break your bones ... but words can break your heart.

Broken bones heal, but it takes time. When my eight-year-old son broke his arm, we had to go to the doctor and get X-rays. The bones were patched up and set in place. Next came the plaster cast to hold everything together. Finally, it was time to go home. For the next few days there was quite a bit of pain, which required his mother and me to show compassion and care as we addressed all of his needs. He lost the full use of his arm for a month or so, but then he was back to playing, pitching a baseball, and climbing trees.

God's process for healing a broken heart is a lot like healing a broken bone.

Pray. Come to God and let him know that you are in pain. He will listen carefully. He will know exactly what to do.

Listen. Give God a chance to look into your heart and life, just like an X-ray, and make his own assessment of what needs to take place. Trust him. He can read your charts much better than you can.

Rest. God will put his arms of love around you and hold everything that is broken together with the plaster of his kindness and strong compassion. He will comfort you with his promises and surround you with his people, the church, who will hold you up while you heal.

Trust. You might find that you are not fully functional for a while. There will be some pain. Share your hurts with others whom you can trust – people in the church who understand and will nurse you back to health. But, just like healing a broken bone, you can't do it alone.

Rejoice. One day, when the healing is done, you will laugh again and face life with hopefulness and joy. You can count on God. You have his word on it. *"He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds."*

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 35

Cast all your care upon him, for he cares for you. 1 Peter 5:7 NKJV

At first glance, this verse is a promising invitation to de-complicate life. Peter apparently counsels us to “dump and run,” casting our problems on God, because he’s somehow obliged to relieve us from difficulties. Is Peter advising us to avoid responsibility for our troubles? Or is this reading naive, especially as it relates to relationships and their inevitable anxieties and conflicts?

In its context, this verse actually encourages Christians to become mature and to embrace their responsibilities. Peter identifies the key to “casting our cares” as humility: *“God gives grace to the humble. Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon him, for he cares for you”* (1 Peter 5:5-7 NKJV). Why does Peter connect our cares with humility before God?

Humility is seeing ourselves in relationship with God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—“The I AM,” “The ALWAYS.” God is described in Scripture as loving, good, wise, gracious, merciful, never-changing, all-powerful, all-knowing, everywhere-at-once, sovereign, before all, over all, in all, through all, and so much more! Humility stands in rapt attention before God and exclaims, “I’m not worthy!” Humility acknowledges and acts on one profound truth: “You are God, and I am NOT!”

And it is this God who says to the humble, “Do you need my grace in a relationship right now? Cast all of your cares on me because I care for you. Bring me every heartbreak, every disappointment, every conflict. It’s all important to me because you’re important to me. I care about your relationships. And because you have humbly asked, I will pour out my grace on your life.”

When you are worried about a relationship, do what Peter says: **Humble yourself before God, cast your care on him, and receive his grace.**

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...



TRANSFORMED IN MY FINANCIAL HEALTH

SESSION 6

SESSION 6

TRANSFORMED IN MY FINANCIAL HEALTH

CHECKING IN

- Which of the seven relational health verses from your devotional reading this past week was the most meaningful to you?
- When it comes to money, are you more of a saver or a spender?

MEMORY VERSE

Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine. Proverbs 3:9-10 NIV

**WATCH THE VIDEO LESSON NOW AND FOLLOW ALONG
IN YOUR OUTLINE.**

TRANSFORMED IN MY FINANCIAL HEALTH

SEVEN HABITS FOR FINANCIAL HEALTH

- I must trust God as my _____ and _____

Everything comes from (God) and exists by his power and is intended for his glory. Romans 11:36 NLT

Remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth. Deuteronomy 8:18 NIV

- I must keep _____

Riches can disappear fast... so watch your business interests closely. Know the state of your flocks and your herds. Proverbs 27:23-24 TLB

- I must give the first _____ back to God

The purpose of tithing is to teach you always to put God first in your lives. Deuteronomy 14:23b TLB

Honor the Lord by giving him the first part of all your income, and he will fill your barns (to overflowing!) Proverbs 3:9-10 TLB

- I must _____ and _____ for the future

The wise man saves for the future, but the foolish man spends whatever he gets. Proverbs 21:20 TLB

Money that comes easily disappears quickly, but money that is gathered little by little will grow. Proverbs 13:11 NCV

Develop your business first before building your house. Proverbs 24:27 TLB

- I must set up a _____ to get myself out of debt

Don't withhold repayment of your debts. Proverbs 3:27 TLB

Let no debt remain outstanding. Romans 13:8 NIV

- I must _____ my spending

Plan carefully and you will have plenty; if you act too quickly, you will never have enough.
Proverbs 21:5 TEV

Stupid people spend their money as fast as they get it. Proverbs 21:20b TEV

- I must _____ what I have

Godliness with contentment is great gain. 1 Timothy 6:6 NIV

It is better to be satisfied with what you have than to be always wanting something else.
Ecclesiastes 6:9 TEV

Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for (God) has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Hebrews 13:5 ESV

Don't worry ... Your heavenly Father already knows perfectly well (what you need), and he will give (it) to you if you give him first place in your life and live as he wants you to.
Matthew 6:31-33 TLB

You have to decide if you are going to trust God or yourself with your finances. Are you going to do it your way or are you going to do it God's way?

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

(PICK AT LEAST ONE OR TWO)

- What difference does it make when you consider that your money is on loan from God?

- How might your financial habits change if you asked yourself every day, **“How does God want me to spend his money?”**

- Why do money issues cause so much stress in people’s lives? What would life look like if we put our **trust in God instead of our finances?**

- Why do you think so many people find it hard to budget? What tools have you found helpful in **“telling your money where it should go?”**

DAY 36

He who refreshes others will himself be refreshed. Proverbs 11:25 NIV

It pays to give.

There is a universal principle at work called “the law of sowing and reaping,” and it is a spiritual reality. We see it in this passage in terms of “refreshment.” You give some refreshment and you will be refreshed yourself. Give some relief to someone else and you will be relieved.

When I was a kid I worked one summer for a family that was pretty well-to-do. They would have parties out on the lake, and it was my job to walk around and serve appetizers and beverages to the guests. Five poor friends and I were living in a guest house on the property, and our usually meager meals were augmented every time there was a party and we were called upon to serve. I could have rewritten this verse for myself: He who serves a few refreshments will get to eat a few refreshments himself!”

Later in life, with a somewhat fuller measure of maturity, I began to understand this idea in a deeper way. The Scripture explains, *“Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously”* (2 Corinthians 9:6 NIV).

When God sees generosity that flows from us to others, whether it be in time or money or love, he takes pleasure in us. In a generous heart, God finds a portrait himself. When we give like God gives, we become a reflection of his bountiful love for all of us. God rewards us as we give freely by freely giving back to each of us more than we could imagine.

Here’s what this Scriptural promise means to me:

You want to be blessed? Bless others. You want to be greatly blessed? Bless others richly!

You want to be loved? Love. You want to be deeply loved? Love a lot!

You want to be prosperous? Give. You want to be very, very prosperous? Give a lot!

Remember this: *“Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.”* It’s a fact of life. It’s the truth. It pays to give.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 37

So do not worry, saying, “*What shall we eat?*” or “*What shall we drink?*” or “*What shall we wear?*” For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Matthew 6:31-33 NIV

Jesus’ words about what we eat, drink, and wear are so practical. He reminds us that behavior reflects belief. If you believe God is your Provider, you will behave that way, obeying him, serving others, and believing “*all these things will be given to you as well.*” Your focus will be on the kingdom of God. But if you believe you are your own provider, you will behave that way, worrying and scrambling to make ends meet. Your focus will be on the kingdom of you.

Jesus contrasts attitudes and actions, which are either earthbound (a pagan’s) or eternal (a disciple’s) life-investments. Some people’s investment is earthbound: running from this to that, moving from relationship to relationship, job to job, hobby to sports to recreation, following fads, taking seminars and therapies, and purchasing the latest self-help books. They are often fiscally challenged, squandering money, and using people to try to get ahead. Unhappy and restless, they look for materialistic fulfillment in all the wrong places because Jesus Christ is not the center of their life. They look to themselves to supply their needs.

A Christ-follower’s investment is eternal: following Jesus, “*seeking his kingdom and his righteousness,*” building relationships through loving God and serving others, finding meaning and purpose in their work, and regularly dialoguing with God through the Scriptures, worship, prayer, and by listening to the Holy Spirit. They are often fiscally healthy, using money to love God and people. They are satisfied, integrated, and content because Jesus is the center of life. **They look to God to supply their needs.**

So stop stressing about food, drink, and clothes. Start “*seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness,*” as the foundation for life-investing and your financial health.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 38

Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. Malachi 3:10 NIV

There are three words in this verse you must understand to be financially whole: tithe, test, and blessing. The word tithe means 10%. I don't know why God tells us to give 10%; he could have said 50% or 30% or 90%. I do know that what we give is an act of trust and worship. Jesus affirmed this in Matthew 23:23 as he taught that we should tithe. When the Father says it and Jesus affirms it, it's a no brainer that we are to do it.

God obviously knew this would be hard for us, so he said, *"Put me to the test."* This is the only place in all of Scripture where God tells us to put him to the test. He knows that as he shows himself to be faithful, our heart for giving will only increase.

To be financially healthy you also need to understand God's idea of blessing. A blessing is not a purchase, it is a gift. If you only give to God in order to get exactly what you want, you are thinking too small. You are cheating yourself out of all that God wants to give you. God does give material blessings on earth, no doubt. But beyond that, he gives the blessings of being able to give to others, of growth and change in your own life, and of investing your life now in ways that make a difference for eternity. God's blessings will not always be what you expect, they will be more than you could have imagined.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 39

Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine. Proverbs 3:9-10 NIV

There are more verses in the Bible about giving and tithing than any other topic. In fact, over half of Jesus' parables deal with material possessions. Jesus spoke more about money than he did about heaven or hell. Why? There are a number of reasons why the Bible has so much to say about finances, but let's look at just two.

First, God wants you to become like him, and he is generous. God's generosity flows out of his love for you and me. The most famous verse in the Bible, John 3:16, is about God's generosity: *"God so loved the world that he gave his only Son..."*

Everything you have is because of God's great generosity and love. And he wants you to honor him by giving back to him the "first part" of what you make. He blesses your life so that you can be a blessing to others. Generosity breaks the grip of greed and materialism on your life. A loving heart is a generous heart, and you are most like Jesus when you give.

Second, God wants you to trust him with your finances. Money tends to dominate our lives. So much of our time is spent making it, spending it, saving it, investing it, or giving it. Financial tensions and conflicts are still one of the top five reasons for divorce. God's money-management plan is simple: Trust him with your wealth by giving to him first, *"then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim with new wine."* In other words, trust God with your finances and he will meet your needs.

In a world of economic uncertainty, God's plan for your finances is the best investment you can make for your future. Ask God to help you overcome any fear or worry you might have about trusting him and becoming more generous with your finances.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 40

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." Hebrews 13:5 NIV

What does it mean to love money? It means worshiping money, and worshiping money is a problem. The Bible makes it clear we are to worship God alone. When you worship something, you give your time, your resources, and your energy to that thing. Whatever you worship consumes your life. How can we avoid worshiping money? What would it look like to have money, use money and make money without worshiping it? **The answer is contentment.**

What is contentment? Contentment is not saying, "I like where I'm at," as though you should never have any financial goals or you should not try to increase your net worth. In fact, God says, "*Those who work hard will prosper*" (Proverbs 13:4 NLT). Contentment is saying, "**Regardless of my circumstances, I have Christ in my life.**" That's contentment. Contentment isn't based on your financial status. Rather, it is based on your relationship with God. We are content because God has promised that no matter what, he is with us and he will never forsake us. So, I can be content in my present circumstances because my contentment is not based upon them.

If you are searching for contentment, look beyond your present circumstances. Look beyond the here and now. Look to the promise of God. Have an eternal perspective. God says he will always be with you. You have eternal life in him. As a result, you can be content in whatever current financial circumstance you find yourself. Whether you are materially rich or not, you are rich in God.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 41

And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. 2 Corinthians 9:8 NIV

You are blessed to be a blessing. You're not meant to just sit back and bask in God's grace. Grace is given so that you can abound in good works. We're saved by grace. We're forgiven by grace. The Bible says we're strengthened by grace. We're set free from problems and sins by grace. All of the talents you have were given to you as a gift of grace. You're used by God's grace. The Bible says we're kept saved by God's grace. You're transformed by grace.

Robert Louis Stevenson said, "There is nothing in the universe but God's grace." We walk upon it, we breathe it, we live and die by it. God's grace is what holds everything together. If it weren't for God's grace, your life would fall apart. Your family would fall apart, this nation would fall apart, the world would stop spinning on its axis. It is all held together by God's grace. **Everything in life is a blessing from God.**

Knowing all that God has given us, how could we possibly just use it for ourselves? God's abundance is not an invitation to indulgence, it is a call to generosity. God blesses you so you can bless other people. And how do you bless others? By giving to them what God has given you: your skills, your time, your treasures, your talents. When you give out of what God has given to you, this verse says you are abounding in every good work. That is the richest life you could possibly live.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 42

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” Luke 6:38 NIV

The picture in this verse comes from a man going to get seed from an open-air market. The owner of the store says, “I’ll sell you a basket worth of seed for so much money.” So he pours the seed in, and then he shakes it and presses it so that he can get the most seed in his basket.

That’s the way God gives. You give to him, he gives back. You shake it up and he gives more until it’s overflowing. Our God is a generous God! When you realize God’s generosity, you lose your fear of planting the seed he has given you. Fear causes us to hold on to what we have, but faith gives us the courage to depend on God and plant seeds.

When you have a need, plant a seed. Seed is precious, but it is absolutely worthless until you spread it around. Imagine two farmers. One says, “I’ve got all this seed. I think I’ll just hoard it this year. I want to protect it.” The other farmer says, “No, I’m going to take all the seed I have and spread it all over my field.” At the harvest nine months later you see the difference. One man is a tragedy. Not only does he not harvest anything, but that which he kept has probably rotted. But the man who sowed generously sees God bless him with a rich harvest.

The more you give, the more God gives to you. The more you use your talents, the more you use your time, the more you use your money for good, the more God can multiply it in your life. You release your faith through practical action. Plant a seed today. **Make a deposit. Act in faith. Step out.**

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

A black and white photograph of an astronaut standing on the lunar surface. The astronaut is wearing a full space suit and is positioned to the left of the lunar module. The lunar module is a large, complex structure with various instruments and a satellite dish. An American flag is planted in the ground in front of the module. The lunar surface is covered in dust and has numerous footprints. The background shows the dark, cratered horizon of the moon.

TRANSFORMED IN MY VOCATIONAL HEALTH

SESSION 7

SESSION 7

TRANSFORMED IN MY VOCATIONAL HEALTH

CHECKING IN

- Which of the seven financial health principles from your devotional reading this past week was the most meaningful to you?
- If you could have any job in the world, what would it be and why?

MEMORY VERSE

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men. Colossians 3:23 NIV

**WATCH THE VIDEO LESSON NOW AND FOLLOW
ALONG IN YOUR OUTLINE.**

TRANSFORMED IN MY VOCATIONAL HEALTH

What profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?

Matthew 16:26 NKJV

SEVEN BIBLICAL ATTITUDES FOR A HEALTHY WORK LIFE

- I must start working _____ wherever I am

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart. Colossians 3:23 NIV

- This job is a _____ from God

Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much ... If you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own? Luke 16:10-12 NIV

- God is _____

Work hard so God can say to you, "Well done." Be a good workman, one who does not need to be ashamed when God examines your work. 2 Timothy 2:15 TLB

- My _____ determines my _____

The diligent find freedom in their work; the lazy are oppressed by work. Proverbs 12:24 MSG

Never be lazy in your work, but serve the Lord enthusiastically. Romans 12:11 TLB

- I must understand who I'm really _____

Work hard and cheerfully at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and the Master you are serving is Christ. Colossians 3:23-24 NLT

• I must concentrate on building _____

• I must care about _____

Whatever you do, do it with kindness and love. 1 Corinthians 16:14 TLB

Don't be concerned only about your own interests, but also be concerned about the interests of others. Philippians 2:4 GWT

Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Ephesians 4:2 NLT

• I must exceed what is _____

Servants, do what you're told by your earthly masters. And don't just do the minimum that will get you by. Do your best. Colossians 3:22 MSG

If anyone requires you to go one mile, go two miles with him. Matthew 5:41 NJB

• I must expand my skills with _____

If the ax is dull and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed but skill will bring success. Ecclesiastes 10:10 NIV

• I must dedicate my work to be used for _____

Commit your work to the Lord, and then your plans will succeed. Proverbs 16:3 NLT

We are Christ's ambassadors. 2 Corinthians 5:20 NLT

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS (PICK AT LEAST ONE OR TWO)

- What does it look like for you to live for the glory of God in your workplace? What are some practical ways you can **turn your work into an act of worship?**

- Think of one person you know who could use some **encouragement** in their work this week. What can you do to help them?

- The Bible says, "*We are Christ's ambassadors*" (2 Corinthians 5:20 NLT). What does an ambassador do? Whose interests does an ambassador represent? How can you be Christ's ambassador in your workplace?

- How many of the things that are frustrating you at work right now would be no big deal if you chose to **see God as your boss?** What is one thing you think would change in your perspective and attitude toward your work?

DAY 43

Commit your work to the Lord, and then your plans will succeed. Proverbs 16:3 NLT

There comes a point of decision where you have to stop talking and start acting. You have to begin. Once you've decided a risk is worth taking, you take off. You can't get to second base without leaving first.

Think of a trapeze artist. There is that moment of truth where she swings out to catch the bar that is swinging toward her. But in order to reach the bar, she has to let go of the one she is swinging on. If she doesn't let go, she just swings back to where she started. But if she does let go, there's split second in time where she is hanging in mid-air, thirty feet above the ground, and holding on to absolutely nothing. That's what faith looks like.

Commit your work to the Lord, and then your plans will succeed. First you commit your goal to God, then you make your plans, then you take a step of faith, confident that

God will give you success. How do you know when you've committed your plans or work or business to the Lord? He gets to be involved in the decisions. That means you pray about every decision. Planning without prayer is presumption. It also means that you make decisions that fit with the truth of his Word. You worship at work by obeying God. And when you find success, you give God the glory.

There is no limit to what God will do in the life of the person or the business that gives him the glory.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 44

But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth. Deuteronomy 8:18a NIV

Everything you have is a gift from God, including your ability to create wealth. After all, who gave you your hands and your brain? Who gave you your talents and abilities? You wouldn't have anything if it wasn't for the grace of God. You wouldn't even be alive.

This verse tells us that producing wealth is an ability. You might have great abilities in this area. Perhaps God has gifted you with a strong business sense and you are just naturally good at making money. That is a God-given ability. And since God gave it to you, you really can't be prideful about it. On the other hand, you might be a person who is always struggling financially. Don't be discouraged; ask God for the ability to produce what you need and remember that you have other abilities.

The great truth of this verse is that you can make money to the glory of God. If you have a beautiful voice, you should sing to the glory of God. If you have strong athletic skills, you should run to the glory of God. If you have a great business sense, you should make money to the glory of God. How can the business ability to make a deal, close a sale, plan a project – how in the world can that ability be used for the glory of God? By recognizing where that ability came from. By giving back to him the first ten percent of your income from the profits. By acting ethically and morally. And by providing a legitimate service or product that can help people. That all brings glory to God.

Why did God give you the ability to create wealth? It's not just for yourself. God's abilities are given to us so that we can serve him and serve others. **Every ability is given by God and every ability can be used for God's glory.**

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 45

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct your paths. Proverbs 3:5-6 NKJV

It's our heart that often fails us.

As a pastor, I've been included in many a eulogy. I can remember hearing these words at the passing of a businessman and friend: "Because of the stress and pressures he faced in business, his heart failed him."

The hidden meaning behind these words was clear. His heart gave out, it failed or quit on him because of stress, fear, and the concerns of what the world was throwing at him. He was such a brilliant and talented leader. Wealthy. Strategic. Visionary. And yet, all of his wisdom and understanding was not enough to lean on. I have a feeling that there was always a lingering question, "Am I getting it right?"

There will always be questions in our hearts and minds if we are leaning on our own understanding.

It's totally different when we rely wholly upon the wisdom of God and can clearly and unashamedly declare, "I am NOT a self-made man. I lean on the Lord. It is clearly God who has gotten me this far. Without him, I would be lost trying to live life on my own."

As God's people, we can always depend on him. It's when we are not leaning wholly on him and we start trusting ourselves that we begin to second guess our own decisions. We wonder, we lack confidence, we worry, fret and stress out ... and our hearts can fail us.

So, starting today, meet with God every morning in prayer, consult his Word for direction, and commit yourself to live the life that God would have you live. He will lead you, guide you, and set your paths straight. **You have his word on it.**

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 46

For the Lord grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He grants a treasure of common sense to the honest. He is a shield to those who walk with integrity. Proverbs 2:6-7 NLT

Some people are good with words, but God is better. He can do much more with words than any man. He created the world by speaking it into being. You exist because he spoke.

Since the Bible is God's Word, a verse from the Bible is much more powerful than a wishful line inside a fortune cookie. A verse is what God says, recorded in ink. When we read it, the Holy Spirit makes it alive in us. He said it, you receive it.

Today's verse is just four lines long, but each line is powerful:

The first line describes the gift God gives. He gives wisdom. He grants it. Now that's a grant you want to apply for. We all want wisdom, especially in the workplace.

The second line tells you where the wisdom comes from: It's his words. Everything he says is wise. He is the wisest person in the universe. Listening to him makes you wise.

The third line uncovers the mystery of who receives wisdom. It's those who are honest. In fact, he gives them a treasure of common sense. Have you noticed that common sense isn't very common?

The fourth line tells you who keeps this wisdom. After all, you don't want to lose it. In one sentence, he tells you that he protects you and your wisdom when you walk in integrity.

So, God has wisdom. He is the source. He gives it to the honest. He protects it in those with integrity. There you have it, the formula to finding, gaining, and keeping wisdom.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 47

Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed. Proverbs 15:22
NIV

This truth applies to Your personal life and your work life. Like most people, there are probably some things you are good at and some things you need to improve on. Also, like most people, you're probably more keenly aware of the weaknesses in your life than you are of the strengths you have. That's why so many New Year's resolutions are made every December 31. **We all want to improve.**

But how?

There are two main ways we can sharpen our skills and shore up our weaknesses. There's the hard way, and the easy way. The hard way is by trial and error. This is the painful way that makes us feel like we have to learn everything by experience. We have to make all the mistakes. We feel the need to do it all on our own.

The easy way is to learn from other people. We learn from their mistakes, and we listen to their advice. Who do you have in your life to turn to for counsel? Look around your small group, look for people you admire, people who love Jesus and who can help you. This way requires that you ask for help, that you seek "many advisers." Having people come alongside you and offer help and counsel means that you don't have to carry the burden on your own. You have the shared wisdom of many people to help you solve problems and reach your goals.

As you think about your challenges, or your weaknesses, or the areas you'd like to improve, ask yourself, **"Am I trying to do it all on my own?"** If the answer is yes, take a few minutes to write down the names of a few people you can ask for wise counsel. Then pick up the phone and call them. You'll be one step closer to success.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 48

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.
James 1:2-3 NIV

People are like tea bags. You don't know what's inside of them until you put them in hot water. Stress and problems have the uncanny ability to reveal what's inside each of us. God says to, "*Consider it pure joy, whenever you face trials.*" The word "*consider*" tells us that we have a choice. We can't choose our trials, but we can always choose how we respond. So how does God want us to respond to these trials? He wants us to consider it joy. In fact, "pure joy!"

Author and speaker Kay Warren says, "Joy is the settled assurance that God is in control of all the details of my life, the quiet confidence that ultimately everything is going to be alright, and the determined choice to praise God in all things."

When we choose to face our trials with joy, the Bible says the testing of our faith produces perseverance.

Notice that James says, "*When (not if) you face trials...*" Storms in life are inevitable. If you're not in a storm right now, just wait – you will encounter one soon enough. Nobody sails through life easily from the cradle to the grave. What's more important is how you choose to face your storms.

If you allow it, God will use storms to work off the rough edges of your personality, to help you regain perspective of who and what is most important, and to grow you up to spiritual maturity,

So the next time you find yourself in a storm, choose to focus on God and not your problem. Consider that there might be something greater at work in your life than just the trial you are facing. And decide daily to choose joy in spite of your circumstances.

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

DAY 49

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Colossians 3:23-24 NIV

You might file receipts for no other reason than to keep your job. You may fetch coffee out of duty, make small talk out of courtesy, or visit potential clients for the profit. On any given workday, you do more activities than you're aware of, for more reasons than you can count.

You do certain tasks on autopilot; others feel like chores. But then there are tasks you feel you were made to do... and maybe you were.

This verse changes everything by telling us that whatever the task, we should do it for more than just the reason at hand. We could jokingly say that we must work with "a double motive": to get things done **and** to work for Christ. The latter is most important.

Every dull task changes when done for your Creator. He is the one you love. He is the one who loves you. This mutual love puts you to work. It compels you to make every effort to turn your activities into gifts for him.

Yes, you can serve Christ by processing lifeless receipts, by handing out coffee, by listening to colleagues, and by selling your clients what they need. But the secret sauce is your "double motive."

We don't deserve a reward for all of this. After all, we act out of love for Christ, and he gave us this love to begin with. But in the verse, he baffles us. He rewards us for every small thing. He serves his servants. **Now that's true love.**

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What will you do?

Now talk to God...

SMALL GROUP GUIDELINES

It's a good idea for every group to put words to their shared values, expectations, and commitments. Such guidelines will help you avoid unspoken agendas and unmet expectations. We recommend you discuss your guidelines during Session 1 to lay the foundation for a healthy group experience. Feel free to modify anything that does not work for your group.

WE AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING VALUES:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| CLEAR PURPOSE | To grow healthy spiritual lives by building a healthy small group community. |
| SAFE ENVIRONMENT | To give priority to the group meeting (call if I am absent or late). |
| BE CONFIDENTIAL | To create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved (no quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes). |
| CONFLICT RESOLUTION | To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group . |
| SPIRITUAL HEALTH | To give group members permission to speak into my life and help me live a healthy, balanced spiritual life that is pleasing to God. |
| LIMIT OUR FREEDOM | To limit our freedom by not serving or consuming alcohol during small group meetings or events to avoid causing a weaker brother or sister to stumble .(1 Corinthians 8:1-13; Romans 14:19-21). |
| WELCOME NEWCOMERS | To invite friends who might benefit from this study and warmly welcome newcomers. |
| BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS | To get to know the other members of the group and pray for them regularly. |

OTHER _____

We have also discussed and agree on the following items:

CHILDCARE _____
STARTING TIME _____
ENDING TIME _____

10X: SPIRITUAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT

Test yourselves to make sure you are solid in the faith. Don't drift along taking everything for granted. Give yourselves regular checkups ... Test it out. If you fail the test, do something about it. 2 Corinthians 13:5 MSG

The *Spiritual Health Assessment* and *Spiritual Health Planner* measure your health at a particular point in time. It is not a tool to see how you measure up against other people; nor is it a tool to see how close you are to perfection. We all know we'll never be perfect on this side of heaven. Rather, this is a tool that will help you evaluation your spiritual health, and give you direction for developing a vibrant relationship with Christ.

		Doesn't Match			Strong Match	
WORSHIP: INTIMACY WITH GOD						
How I live my life shows that God is my highest priority.....	0	1	2	3	4	5
I am dependent on God for every aspect of my life.....	0	1	2	3	4	5
There is nothing in my life that I have not surrendered to (kept back from) God.....	0	1	2	3	4	5
I regularly meditate on God's Word and invite Him into my everyday activities.....	0	1	2	3	4	5
I have a deep desire to spend time in God's presence.....	0	1	2	3	4	5
I am the same person in public that I am in private.....	0	1	2	3	4	5
I have an overwhelming sense of God's awesomeness even when I do not feel His presence.....	0	1	2	3	4	5
WORSHIP TOTAL _____						

FELLOWSHIP: COMMUNITY						
I am genuinely open and honest about who I am.....	0	1	2	3	4	5
I regularly use my time and resources to care for the needs of others..	0	1	2	3	4	5
I have a deep and meaningful connection with others in the church.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I have an easy time receiving advice, encouragement, and correction from others.....	0	1	2	3	4	5
I gather regularly with a group of Christians for fellowship and accountability	0	1	2	3	4	5
There is nothing in my relationships that is currently unresolved	0	1	2	3	4	5
There is nothing in the way I talk or act concerning others that I would not be willing to share with them in person	0	1	2	3	4	5
FELLOWSHIP TOTAL _____						

DISCIPLESHIP: CHRISTLIKENESS

I am quick to confess anything in my character that not look like Christ	0	1	2	3	4	5
A review of how I use my finances shows that I think more about God than I do about myself	0	1	2	3	4	5
I allow God's Word to guide my thoughts and change my actions	0	1	2	3	4	5
I am able to praise God during difficult times and see them as opportunities to grow	0	1	2	3	4	5
I find I am making better choices to do what is right when I am tempted to do wrong	0	1	2	3	4	5
I have found that prayer has changed how I view and interact with the world	0	1	2	3	4	5
I am consistent in pursuing habits that are helping me model my life after Jesus	0	1	2	3	4	5

DISCIPLESHIP TOTAL _____

MINISTRY: SERVANTHOOD

I regularly use my time to serve God	0	1	2	3	4	5
I am currently serving God with the gifts and passions he has given me	0	1	2	3	4	5
I regularly reflect on how my life can have an impact for the kingdom of God	0	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoy meeting the needs of others without expecting anything in return	0	1	2	3	4	5
I often think about ways to use my God-given gifts and abilities to please God	0	1	2	3	4	5
Those closest to me would say my life is a reflection of giving more than receiving	0	1	2	3	4	5
I see my painful experiences as opportunities to minister to others	0	1	2	3	4	5

MINISTRY TOTAL _____

EVANGELISM: SHARING MY FAITH

I feel personal responsibility to share my faith with those who don't know Jesus	0	1	2	3	4	5
I look for opportunities to build relationships with those who don't know Jesus	0	1	2	3	4	5
I regularly pray for those who don't know Christ	0	1	2	3	4	5
I am confident in my ability to share my faith	0	1	2	3	4	5
My heart is full of passion to share the good news of the gospel with those who have never heard it	0	1	2	3	4	5
I find that my relationship with Jesus comes up frequently in my conversations with those who don't know him	0	1	2	3	4	5
I am open to going anywhere God calls me, in whatever capacity, to share my faith	0	1	2	3	4	5

EVANGELISM TOTAL _____



ON EARTH
AS IT IS
IN HEAVEN

10X