

WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER
GROWING PEOPLE CHANGE
EVERYONE IS DESIGNED TO
SERVE FOUND PEOPLE FIND

RESTART



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PEOPLE GENEROUS PEOPLE
TRANSFORM THE WORLD
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A FRESH START IN FIVE ESSENTIAL AREAS OF YOUR LIFE

GREGG SVALSTAD

*with LISA TONEY, PETER TORRY, ERIC HOLMSTROM
and NANCY MATARRITA*

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Finally, my hope and prayer is that all honor and glory will go to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and that the Holy Spirit will take His Word and our words and use them for His purposes in the lives of everyone who reads them.

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WELCOME TO

RESTART

FIVE ESSENTIAL AREAS OF LIFE



WHY RESTART?

Have you ever had a day you wish you could start over? Or, perhaps you have been in a relationship where you wished you could go back and undo all of the hurt you may have caused and begin anew. All of us make mistakes. We all make some wrong turns in this journey called life—but with Jesus we can experience a Restart.

Jesus said in John 10:10 *“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”* That is what God wants for our lives—He wants us to experience the full life He created us to live. This full life begins when we chose to follow the One who loves us most and loves us best. As we place our trust in Jesus, we can experience a Restart in our lives. Over the next 40 Days, we are going to study how to follow Jesus fully in five essential areas of our lives.

WHY 40 DAYS?

We find that 40 days is a spiritually significant time period in the Bible. When God wanted to prepare someone for His purposes, he often used a 40-day period.

- Noah’s life was transformed by 40 days of rain.
- Moses was transformed by 40 days on Mount Sinai.
- The spies were transformed by 40 days in the Promised Land.
- David was transformed by Goliath’s 40-day challenge.
- Jesus was empowered by 40 days in the wilderness.
- The disciples were transformed by 40 days with Jesus after His resurrection.
- 40 Days of Purpose—Rick Warren

We believe that if you set apart the next 40 days to seek God, He will do amazing things in your life.

WHY THESE FIVE AREAS?

At Purpose Church we have spent a lot of time studying what the Bible says about what should be our core values as individual Christ followers and as a church. The five areas of life you will study make up our core values.

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF **RE**START

The Restart devotional will be our guide as we look to restart as individuals, as groups, and as a church in 2017. The 40 days consist of six daily readings and a Life Group session guide for each week. Here is how you can get the most out of the 40 Days:

READ IT DAILY

Set aside a specific time each day where you can read, reflect, journal and pray during your quiet time.

DON'T JUST READ IT

Be sure to interact with it, mark up your book, highlight insights, write out your questions, journal your thoughts, and respond to what God is saying to you. For this purpose we have included a journal page for each day. The journal pages will have prompts to guide you in your time with God:

GO THROUGH IT WITH A GROUP

In order to experience a Restart, we need more than knowledge gained from the daily readings, we also need personal encouragement from people who are with us on this journey. You will find this in a small group with people who can help you grow. The Bible says in Proverbs 27:17 *“As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.”* It will be important for you to not go through this journey alone but to commit yourself to a Life Group so you can encourage one another on this journey. Contact us to help you find a Life Group to go through RESTART with. ChanelD@PurposeChurch.com or call 909-629-5277x3031

WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER

We are better when we work and share together. We would love to hear from you as you do the readings and have your group sessions. Share with us what speaks to you, any typos or errors you find, insights that come out in your group discussions and ideas you have to add to or improve the book for future readers and groups. Please email me at GreggS@PurposeChurch.com.



SHARE YOUR STORY

EACH OF US HAS A STORY. THE EVENTS OF OUR LIVES-- GOOD, BAD, WONDERFUL, AND CHALLENGING— HAVE SHAPED WHO WE ARE.

GOD KNOWS YOUR STORY AND HE VALUES YOU AND EVERY PART OF YOUR STORY. HE INTENDS TO USE EVERY STRUGGLE AND EVERY TRIUMPH OF YOUR LIFE TO ULTIMATELY BRING YOU TO HIMSELF. WHEN WE SHARE OUR STORIES WITH OTHERS WE GIVE THEM THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE GOD AT WORK IN OUR LIVES.

WHEN WE SHARE OUR STORIES, WE ALSO BEGIN TO REALIZE WE ARE NOT ALONE, THAT WE HAVE COMMON EXPERIENCES AND THOUGHTS, AND THAT OTHERS CAN UNDERSTAND WHAT WE ARE GOING THROUGH MORE THAN WE REALIZED. YOUR STORY CAN ENCOURAGE SOMEONE ELSE AND SHARING IT CAN GIVE YOU AND THOSE YOU SHARE IT WITH A NEW SENSE OF FREEDOM TO FIND TOGETHER WHAT GOD WANTS TO DO IN YOUR LIVES.

Begin your time together by using any of the following activities or questions to begin sharing with one another.

If your group has a number of people who don't know each other yet, then spend time having everyone introduce themselves or pair up and then introduce your partner to the rest of the group. Here are some questions you can use:

- Where did you grow up?
- When did you come to Purpose Church?
- Have you been involved in other small groups like this?
- What led you to join this group?
- What is one hope you have for this RESTART EXPERIENCE?

Have someone in the group share a two-minute story of what their life was like before they were following Jesus and how Jesus changed their life.

Share a time when you wish you had a “do over” because something didn't turn out the way you had hoped.

LOOK TO GOD'S STORY

SOME PEOPLE THINK EMOTION WILL SUSTAIN DEVOTION— THAT FOLLOWING JESUS IS A MATTER OF MOVING FROM ONE SPIRITUAL HIGH TO THE NEXT AND THAT, IF YOU CAN SUSTAIN THESE FEELINGS, IT WILL BE EASY TO FOLLOW JESUS THROUGH LIFE.

IT IS UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT YOUR EMOTIONS TO DRIVE YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE. INSTEAD, YOU NEED TO BE ROOTED IN GOD'S WORD IN DAILY COMMUNICATION WITH HIM IN PRAYER AND IN CONNECTION WITH OTHER CHRIST FOLLOWERS WHO CAN STRENGTHEN YOUR FAITH. LIFE IS FULL OF PEAKS AND VALLEYS BUT GOD HAS GIVEN US HIS WORD, HIS STORY, TO NAVIGATE THE PATH THROUGH LIFE WITH HIM.

READ **Luke 19:1-10**

STUDY NOTES

Since only the tax collectors knew the rate required by Rome, they could inflate the rate and keep the difference. Though a Jew, Zacchaeus would have been hated by his fellow Jews as a traitor who got rich at his people's expense.

- Knowing what we know of Zacchaeus, why do you think he wanted to see Jesus? Why do you think he climbed the tree?
- What do you think Zacchaeus felt when Jesus said, "come down immediately. I must stay at your house today."
- From this passage, how do you think Zacchaeus' life was different after this "restart" with Jesus.

CONTINUE HIS STORY

GOD WANTS YOU TO BE PART OF HIS KINGDOM—TO WEAVE YOUR STORY INTO HIS.

CONTINUING HIS STORY IN OUR LIVES MEANS CHANGE—TO CHOOSE TO GO HIS WAY RATHER THAN YOUR OWN. THIS WON'T HAPPEN OVERNIGHT, BUT IT SHOULD HAPPEN STEADILY. BY STARTING WITH SMALL SIMPLE CHOICES, WE BEGIN TO CHANGE OUR DIRECTION.

THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS US ALONG THE WAY—GIVING US GIFTS TO SERVE, OFFERING US INSIGHTS INTO THE BIBLE AND CHALLENGING US TO LOVE NOT ONLY THOSE WHO ARE CLOSE TO US BUT ALSO THOSE FAR FROM GOD.

READ **John 10:10**

RESPOND

- When Jesus says He has “...come that they may have life and have it to the full,” what do you think that means?
- What are some ways that “the thief” has stolen, killed or destroyed in your life during the past months?
- What would “life to the full” look like for you?
- What ways do you hope that RESTART can bring you to, or back to, “life to the full”?

LIVE IT OUT

GROUP CALENDAR

DATE	LESSON	SNACK	
	INTRO		
	1		
	2		
	3		
	4		
	5		
	6		

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

DATE	TIME

SERVE EXPERIENCES

DATE	TIME	SERVICE



DAY 1 **YOU WERE MADE TO BELONG** Gregg Svalstad

Romans 12:4-5

For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

From the beginning God declared “I did not create people to be alone” (Genesis 2:18). God created us to belong. He designed us to be born into families in order to have a place to belong, and to learn to love and be loved. We were created to live in community and none of us can fulfill God’s plan and purpose for our lives by living in isolation. While our relationship to Christ is personal, God never intends it to be private. When you chose to believe in Jesus, you also chose to belong to His body.

When we become a follower of Jesus we become a member of His body. C.S Lewis noted that the word membership is of Christian origin, but the world has emptied it of its original meaning. To Paul (the writer of Romans), being a “member” of the church meant being a vital part of a living body, an indispensable, interconnected part of the body of Christ.

For the organs of your body to fulfill the purpose they were created for, they must be connected to your body. The same is true for every one of us as followers of Jesus! Each of us was created for a specific role in the body. You discover your role in life through your relationship with other members of the body.

If a part of the body is somehow severed from its body, it will shrivel and die. It cannot exist on its own, and neither can you. If you want to experience a RESTART in your relationship to Jesus, one of the best steps you can take is to make new and deeper connections with the body of Christ.

What about you? As you reflect on the past weeks and months, have you grown deeper in your connections to the body of Christ, or have you grown more distant and disconnected?

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

DAY 2 VALUABLE TEAM MEMBERS

Tamiko Chacon

1 Corinthians 12:27*Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.***Galatians 3:26-28***So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

When I was in junior high, I was crazy about baseball. I played softball and I loved Major League Baseball. I knew all the teams, the players, the rules... My favorite player was Will Clark, the first baseman for the San Francisco Giants. My dad let me skip school and took me to a Giants game for fan day where I actually met Will Clark, took a photo with him and got his autograph. It was the greatest day of my junior high school life! He was a fabulous player: a great fielder, strong batter, and a team leader. But are you familiar with him? Most likely not... Unless you're a die-hard Giants fan. You may know Willie Mays, Willie McCovey or Barry Bonds, but probably not Will Clark. His greatest contribution wasn't that he is one of the most notable players or that his baseball card garners lots of money. He was a team player. His career batting average was .303 with 2,176 hits, 284 home runs and 1,205 RBIs. He won the Golden Glove Award and was a six time All-Star. He contributed to successful seasons on four different teams.

Have you ever been on a team? Regardless if you were the star player or if (like me!) you only played when your team had a strong lead, you were important. Each player is valuable! Every culture and language group is part of the body of Christ and all have an important role to play in building the Church. A diverse church is a winning church!

Diversity must not be confused with political correctness. Diversity comes from an understanding of God's plan to be reconciled to all people through Jesus Christ. It doesn't mean that our race is not valued or that when we become a believer we must reject our ethnic background. Rather, our race is no longer our primary identity. Our primary identity is that we are now followers of Jesus. A unified church is a witness to the world of the transformative power of the Gospel.

John 13:35*By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*

Here are some practical ways you can incorporate diversity into your spiritual life:

- **Try a different ethnic cuisine.** It's amazing how much food and culture are connected.
- **Read a devotional book written by someone from another race.**
- **Diversify the voices you read on social media.** Listen to other perspectives even if you don't agree with everything they say.
- **Take turns in your life group sharing about your cultural heritage.** You will grow deeper in your friendships if you learn more about each other's history.
- **Start a prayer group and invite people of various ethnicities to join.** Or, visit our international fellowship or one of our ethnic ministries.
- **Pray and sing worship songs in other languages.**

What is God saying to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

DAY 3 CROSS CULTURAL LIVING

Tamiko Chacon

1 Peter 2:17*“Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers...”*

Roti, chai tea, and pakoras at the annual business meeting potluck. Answering “yes,” by saying, “haanji.” This was the norm for me in the church of my childhood. My agricultural hometown is a predominantly white community, known for growing a variety of the state’s produce. When I was in elementary school, the Indian population began to expand as more and more people from the state of Punjab were immigrating to our area.

Motivated by a desire to share the Gospel, my parents, along with a few others, began sharing their faith by visiting homes of these new residents. Our church leadership was inspired to bring a bilingual Punjabi pastor to our city to lead this effort, and Pastor Gulam Masih and his family moved from Birmingham, England to Yuba City, CA. Under Pastor Gulam’s ministry, the Indian congregation began to grow and became integrated into the church. We worshipped together, learning praise songs in Punjabi. We attended Indian weddings, celebrating through dance and participating in Indian wedding traditions.

My understanding of Christianity was greatly informed by my church’s approach to an integrated congregation and my exposure to Indian culture. I could envision how Jesus sat, taught, and ate with his followers because of my time with our Indian Christian friends. It became clear that Jesus was not a white man, and that the Bible was not written by Americans! It also sparked a desire inside of me to experience Christianity in other contexts and expanded my interest in missions. How wonderful it is to see Jesus through the eyes of someone from another race!

Colossians 3:11*“Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.”*

Who are fellow believers from other cultures that you are in relationship with?

How do these relationships inform your relationship with God?

If you are not in community with people from cultures different from yours, how might you begin to pursue being in relationship with Christians from different ethnic backgrounds?

DAY 4 LOVE IN ACTION

Gregg Svalstad

Ephesians 4:3*Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*

As a Christ follower, it is our job to foster and protect the unity of the church. But unity is not uniformity. Yesterday, we saw from Colossians 3:11 that what sets the body of Christ apart is that our unity is not found in all sharing the same background, race, preferences, and interests but rather the miracle of the body of Christ is that Jesus brings such diverse parts together to form one body.

How do we live out this oneness? All too often in our culture and in the church love and unity has been reduced to words, feeling and sentiments. But, love involves action. Paul says, “make every effort.” Only the Holy Spirit can create real unity and community between believers, but He cultivates it with the choices and commitments we make. Building and experiencing community requires commitment and expressing love in our actions.

Romans 12:9-16

⁹ Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³ Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality. ¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

As Paul describes the body of Christ, he describes love expressed through practical action. But, how is this lived out? The body of Christ, like your own body, is really a collection of many small cells. The same is true in the church. The life of the body is lived out in small groups. As you look at the actions expressed in these verses it is easy to see that many of these are best expressed in a small group context.

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

DAY 5 JESUS' STRATEGY
AND EXAMPLE

Gregg Svalstad

Matthew 4:17-20

From that time on Jesus began to preach... As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen.¹⁹ "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people."²⁰ At once they left their nets and followed him.

One of the first things Jesus did when He began his earthly ministry was to gather a rag-tag bunch of regular guys—fishermen, tax collectors, and others to hang out with Him. This bunch went on to do extraordinary things as Jesus' disciples, but in the beginning they were Jesus' friends and they formed His small group.

And, how did Jesus spend His last hours of freedom before His arrest and crucifixion?

Matthew 26:20

²⁰ When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve.

If Jesus needed to walk through life with other people, how much more do we? Yet so often we isolate ourselves, leaving ourselves open to temptation, loneliness, and all kinds of negative influences. We are stronger and better when we do life the way God designed us to—together!

Not only that, doing life together is just more fun! As we build relationships with other Christ followers we can encourage each other, pray for each other, laugh together, and learn together. Christian music artist Sara Groves says, "these relationships make life half as hard and twice as good." That's what we want for everyone in our church and within the reach of our church.

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

DAY 6 CULTIVATING COMMUNITY

Gregg Svalstad

Many of us grow up in families with unhealthy relationships, and lack the relational models and skills to cultivate or experience community in the way God designed us to experience it. Fortunately, the New Testament is filled with instructions on how to share life together. If you are tired of going through life without experiencing community and you would like to cultivate an authentic community based on Jesus' love, truth, and grace, you'll need to make some tough choices and take some risks.

Ephesians 4:15-16

¹⁵ *Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.* ¹⁶ *From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

We are all called to be active in doing our part to grow together toward unity and spiritual maturity. In order to do this, we are to "speak the truth in love." There are two sides to speaking the truth in love.

First, it involves speaking the truth about who we are and what is happening in our lives. Too often we come to church or to a bible study wearing masks, keeping our guard up, acting as if everything is rosy in our lives. True biblical community happens when we take off our masks and become open about lives. This involves risk, risking rejection, or being hurt. But, it is worth the risk because this is the way God designed us to grow spiritually. Authentic biblical community is not superficial learning and sharing. It is genuine, heart-to-heart, sometimes gut-level sharing. Revealing our feelings, confessing our failures, admitting our doubts and fears, acknowledging our struggles, and asking for help and prayer.

Ephesians 4:25

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

The second side of speaking the truth in love involves caring enough to lovingly speak the truth to others rather than remaining silent, glossing over a problem, or ignoring an issue. Most people don't have anyone in their lives who loves them enough to tell them the truth. Many churches and life groups remain superficial because they are afraid of conflict. Whenever an issue pops up that might cause tension or discomfort, it is immediately glossed over in order to preserve a false sense of unity and peace.

Real fellowship, whether in a marriage, a friendship, the church or a life group depends on speaking the truth in love.

What is God saying to you?

Which type of speaking the truth in love is more difficult for you—being transparent with your own life or speaking hard truths into the lives of others?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.



**WE ARE
BETTER
TOGETHER**

SHARE YOUR STORY

AS WE SAID LAST WEEK, WHEN WE SHARE OUR STORIES WITH OTHERS, WE GIVE THEM THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE GOD AT WORK. YOUR STORY IS BEING SHAPED, EVEN IN THIS MOMENT BY BEING PART OF THIS GROUP. IN FACT, FEW THINGS CAN SHAPE US MORE THAN DOING LIFE TOGETHER.

WHEN WE SHARE OUR STORIES WE CAN ENCOURAGE SOMEONE ELSE AND DEEPEN OUR OWN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT GOD HAS DONE, OR IS DOING, IN OUR LIVES. WE EXPERIENCE THE PRESENCE OF GOD AS HE HELPS US BE BRAVE ENOUGH TO REVEAL OUR TRUE THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS.

BEGIN YOUR TIME TOGETHER BY CHOOSING ONE OR TWO OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES OR QUESTIONS TO BEGIN SHARING WITH ONE ANOTHER.

- **What is your usual approach to meeting new people?**
 - a. To be honest, it makes me very uncomfortable.
 - b. I'm cautious at first, but when I feel comfortable I open up.
 - c. I've never met a stranger—I'm an open book
 - d. _____

Have someone in the group share a two-minute story of what their life was like when they weren't following Jesus and how Jesus changed their life.

Share about a team that you were a part of (sports, work, serving, etc.) that you saw yourself or others become better together.

LOOK TO GOD'S STORY

HOW CAN WE BECOME PART OF GOD'S STORY? BY ALIGNING OUR STORIES WITH HIS AND UNDERSTANDING WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW HIM. THE FOLLOWING PASSAGES AND QUESTIONS WILL GUIDE OUR DISCUSSION AS WE SHARE WHAT GOD HAS REVEALED TO US THROUGH THE DAILY READINGS.

READ **Ecclesiastes 4:9-10**

RESPOND

- Have you ever needed help?
- Describe a time when you received just what you needed through someone else.
- Do you generally have more difficulty giving or receiving, offering or asking for, help?

READ **1 John 3:18**

RESPOND

- What is the difference between these two kinds of love?
- What does it look like to love with “actions and truth”

READ **Hebrews 10:24-25**

RESPOND

- In light of this verse, what would you say to someone who says they are a Christian but do not participate in the life of a church or connect in a small group?
- How have you been “spurred toward love and good deeds” by others in your group recently or in the past?

CONTINUE HIS STORY

IN THIS SECTION. TALK ABOUT HOW YOU WILL APPLY WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED FROM THE SERMON, DAILY READINGS, AND GROUP STUDY/DISCUSSION.

READ Proverbs 13:10

RESPOND

When have you made a bad decision because you made it when you were alone?

- How would the presence or counsel of other people who cared about you and had your best interest in mind potentially have made a difference in that time?
- Have you isolated yourself in any area of your life? What steps can you take during this series to begin to share your life with others?

LIVE IT OUT

THINK ABOUT PRACTICAL STEPS YOU CAN TAKE IN THE COMING WEEK TO LIVE OUT WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED.

- What are some practical ways that members of this group can “spur you on” during this series?
- What are some ways you would like to spur others on in the group?



DAY 8 GROWING PEOPLE CHANGE Gregg Svalstad**Romans 12:2**

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.

Have you ever had a young child in your life that you only saw every few months or once a year? What did you notice every time you saw them? They grew and changed so much, right? From baby to toddler, from toddler to little boy or girl, and on, and on. Healthy children grow and change. The same is true of Christ-followers. When we are healthy spiritually, when we are growing, there will be change in our lives.

We are all wired differently when it comes to change. Some of us look forward to change and more naturally welcome it. Others of us have difficulty adapting to the smallest changes in our lives. In the verses above Paul, the writer of Romans, describes the type of change that all Christ followers should seek. Not external changes that we respond to, but rather internal change, transformation that comes from the Holy Spirit working in our lives.

Paul says instead of being squeezed, conformed to the changing patterns of the world, be transformed from the inside out, by the renewing of your mind. This type of change is what takes place in our lives as we follow Jesus. And this change, this transformation, is not an event that takes place when we first choose to follow Jesus, rather it is a process that continues every day of our lives as we continue to follow Him. And look at what happens through this change—we are able to know more fully God's will for our lives! Who doesn't want that?

As we think again about how a young child grows and matures we recognize that it is an ongoing process and there is always a next step whether crawling, pulling themselves up, walking, speaking words, reading... The same is true in our spiritual lives. Growing people change and there is always a next step.

What steps have you taken in your relationship with Jesus this past week? Month? Year? What is a next step for you as you grow through this RESTART series?

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

DAY 9 **BETTER THAN LIFE**

Eric Holmstrom

Psalm 63:1-5

“You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water. I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you.”

I can't get this Psalm out of my mind. It nags and bothers me. I read Psalm 63 the other day and immediately felt a sense of desire and longing for something greater. I read it over and over and over again and quickly recognized that I could read it with ease, but if I was honest with myself, I was in no way able to write it! Have you ever thought about that. We read Scripture and every once in a while find one of its authors saying audacious things like “earnestly I seek you” or “your love is better than life.” We read those words and think they are nice and admire their faith, but this time, I felt God nudging me to think deeper about this poem. Am I at a depth with God where I could honestly write these words? Am I seeking God earnestly and wholeheartedly believing his love is better than life? How do I get to that place in my relationship with Jesus?

I know this: It is not about having it all together. King David, the poet behind these words, was no perfect man. Some of his greatest sins are recorded and will be re-told until the end of the world. David could not hide from God then and his brokenness is not hidden now. David wasn't always righteous or always the good guy, so these words did not come out of some fake “I have it all together” thinking.

I know this: It is about a “long obedience in the same direction” as Eugene Peterson, one of my favorite authors, says. How do we have the kind of intimacy with God that leads us to earnestly seek Him? Thirst for Him? Know Him to be better than life? It all begins today, in this moment. Don't wait for some magical camp high, rededication night, or after you make that bad decision this weekend for the hundredth time.

Instead, right now, begin seeking God with all you got! Don't wait for the feelings to come or for you to have enough time. Jesus loves us right where we are—but He loves us too much to allow us to stagnantly remain there. God desires a deeper faith with you today than you two had last year, last month, even last week! When you and I seek Him daily and consistently, we will find ourselves desiring Him more, loving Him more, longing for time with Him and eventually saying, “your love is better than life.”

You will desire what you choose to chase after!

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

DAY 10 THE RUNNING FATHER

Eric Holmstrom

Luke 15:20

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.”

I can picture Jesus sitting around that table. He’s got a bunch of friends and new acquaintances on either side and they are eating together, sharing conversation, laughing, and all of a sudden some of the religious elite sneak into the party and begin talking under their breath. They comment and sneer about the kind of people Jesus is hanging out with. They can’t believe this Rabbi would spend time with those people. And just then, Jesus catches eyes with them, they’ve been discovered, but before they can slip out the back door, Jesus uses this moment to share the most important story He ever shared. He knew His captive audience was ready. He had been waiting a long while to tell this story and now was the time. The sinners, tax collectors, and religious elite were all in the same place and each of them needed to hear this.

There was once a man who had two sons. Jesus begins the story with this father figure who we discover loves his two sons and yet each of the boys choose to rebel against him and go their own way. The religious and irreligious are the two sons and Jesus is the Father in the story. The younger son wishes his father dead and asks for his inheritance. The father grants it and after squandering all of the money and sloshing around life aimlessly, the younger son decides to come back to the father as a slave—an attempt to earn his way back. The father sees the younger son while he is a long way off, rehearsing his speech. At once the father runs as fast as he can towards his lost and dead son and welcomes him back into the family. The father throws a party and the older son cannot understand why his dad would do this which turns his confusion into anger. The father runs towards his second son and also invites him back into a restored relationship with Him.

Jesus tells this story at this moment to make it crystal clear to everyone around that table, and to you and me, that God is running after all of us. We each run away and do our own things and yet our gracious God knows how to chase, pursue, and invest in us, His kids. He is passionate about you and me and will relentlessly seek after us! God is our running Father! How has God been chasing after you?

As you spend time with Jesus, listen to David Crowder’s song “Come As You Are”.

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

DAY 11 WAVING THE WHITE FLAG

Gregg Svalstad

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

A tradition held among a certain Native American tribe held that if a person saved your life during a battle, then from that day on, you immediately became His slave. The reasoning behind this was that without this person's intervention, you would most certainly be dead. Because of this, every moment you lived from that point on was a gift from them, and should be lived in their honor.

In a very real sense, the Bible tells us that is what happened to us. As a result of rebellion we were spiritually dead without hope of ever finding the life we were created for. Then Jesus saved us, giving us life! Because of this, our lives belong to Jesus. And the proper response is the surrender of our lives to Jesus.

When we surrender, we let go, and put the focus where it belongs: on Him.

1 Peter 5:6-7

⁶Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. ⁷Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

We learn from this passage that when we surrender, we do not need to fear what "our Master" will do to us. We can rest in the knowledge that he cares for us and will lift us up. Surrendering our lives, placing them in God's mighty hand is the best place to be.

Often our next step of growth involves surrender.

What does that mean in your life? Is it a possession or a person? Is it a hurt or a hope? What is God calling you to surrender?

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

DAY 12 **FIX THESE WORDS
IN YOUR HEART**

Eric Holmstrom

Deuteronomy 11:18

“Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.”

As we think this week about how growing people change, we can't help but start with making a commitment to reading scripture. When it comes to following Jesus, you will always have a next step to take, and this might be that first step for you. In Deuteronomy 11:18, God gives a very important command to His people whom He wants the best for and deeply loves, *“Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.”*

Through Scripture we encounter our Creator. God has revealed Himself through His love letter to us, the Bible. Reading Scripture should not be viewed as a chore, but as an opportunity to connect with the God who created us, loves us, and has a purpose for our lives. Every person is asking three questions: Who am I? Where do I belong? And, what's my purpose? God has not left us on our own to discover the answers to these life-changing questions, in fact He meets us through the pages of Scripture to find the deep answers to these questions.

When we connect with God through Scripture, we are inviting Him to comfort, convict, and change us in whatever ways He knows we need. The Bible should be understood as a library with a variety of genres God uses to speak to us; poetry, historical narrative, letters, biography, prophecy, etc. The Bible is composed of 66 books divided into two smaller sections. The 39 Old Testament books tell the story of God including creation, the law, and the experiences of Israel, who are the people of God. The 27 New Testament books tell the story of Jesus, the explosive growth of the early church, how we are to live as followers of Christ, and Jesus' plan to return!

But how should we read the Bible? That's a great question. There are many different and good methods. To begin, we recommend you read Scripture using the S.O.A.P. method. It is an easy and memorable way of digesting what you are reading. Having a daily time of prayer and reading the Bible is key to spiritual growth. Reading the Bible can seem a little intimidating, however the “SOAP” method will help you connect with God!

S - SCRIPTURE

Read a passage of Scripture. If it is your first time reading the Bible we suggest starting in the Gospel of John. Read a section, paragraph, or entire chapter. It is more about quality than quantity. Write down one verse that stands out to you.

O - OBSERVE

Write down anything that stands out to you in your reading. Where? Who? What? Do not be scared to underline and write notes in your Bible.

A - APPLICATION

Apply what you have learned to your daily life. Ask yourself this question, "How can I apply what I read to my life today?"

P - PRAY

Spend time talking with God; thanking Him and asking for help as you attempt to live out what He has taught you.

DAY 13 YOUR NEXT STEP IN PRAYER Gregg Svalstad

Have you ever successfully brought about a positive change in your life by accident? No, we don't succeed at losing weight, improving grades, getting in shape, organizing our homes, saving money, etc. hoping and waiting to see if it will happen.

However, when I am honest, often I operate like this with regard to prayer and, of course, nothing changes. If we want to grow in the area of prayer we need to be intentional about it. Specifically, we need to make it our intention to follow Jesus' example and teachings about prayer and put these into practice deliberately and persistently.

When should you pray?**Mark 1:35**

³⁵ *Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.*

We need to set apart a regular time each day to pray as part of our daily devotional quiet time. But it should not stop there.

Ephesians 6:18

¹⁸ *And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.*

Throughout the day we should speak to God about the different situations we are facing at the moment and to thank Him and praise Him. Prayer is an aspect of a vibrant loving relationship, not a ritual.

What should you pray?

God wants to hear prayers that come from our hearts. He wants us to be genuine. He would much rather have you pray authentically even if you are angry with Him than to hear you just using "prayer words" that aren't a true expression of how you feel.

Jesus gave His disciples a model prayer which we refer to as "The Lord's Prayer" (**Matthew 6:9-13**). Jesus did not intend for His followers to always pray using these words. Rather, this was a model prayer teaching us principles of prayer. Prayer is not a formula but there are different acrostics people have used based on the Lord's prayer to help follow Jesus' teaching on what to pray about. Here is one you might remember from Rooted: P-R-A-Y. Try using this for your journal time today.

P - raise

To praise Him is to acknowledge how great He is and to thank Him for the great things He has done.

R - epent

To repent literally means to “turn around.” Repenting in prayer means to confess specific sins we have committed and to turn away from doing them again. (1 John 1:8-9).

A - sk

Jesus encourages us to ask for the things that are on our mind, but also to understand that our Father in heaven reserves the right to answer according to His wisdom and love for us (Matthew 7:7-11)

Y - ield

To yield means to be quiet after you have spoken to God and to listen to what He might want to say to you. If you regularly take time to listen, you will begin to hear God’s voice.



**GROWING
PEOPLE
CHANGE**

SHARE YOUR STORY

SHARING PERSONAL
STORIES BUILDS
DEEPER CONNECTIONS
AMONG GROUP
MEMBERS. BEGIN
YOUR TIME TOGETHER
BY USING THE
FOLLOWING
QUESTIONS AND
ACTIVITIES TO GET
PEOPLE STARTED IN
SHARING.

- **Where are you on your spiritual journey?**
 - a. Just getting started
 - b. Continuing on the journey after many years with Jesus
 - c. Getting back on the trail
 - d. Feeling weary
 - e. Feeling energized
 - f. _____

- **How would you describe your spiritual growth patterns?**
 - a. Slow and steady
 - b. Periodic growth spurts
 - c. A roller coaster of ups and downs
 - d. _____

Have someone in the group share a two-minute story of what their life was like when they weren't following Jesus and how Jesus changed their life.

Pair up with someone in your group (men with men and women with women). This person will be your spiritual partner for the rest of this study. He or she doesn't have to become a close friend (although that is allowed). Instead, this person will simply encourage you to complete the goals you set for yourself during this study. Take a moment to pair up and talk about what would help and encourage you the most—phone conversations, texts, emails, getting together periodically ...

LOOK TO GOD'S STORY

THE FOLLOWING
PASSAGES AND
QUESTIONS WILL GUIDE
OUR DISCUSSION AS WE
SHARE WHAT GOD HAS
REVEALED TO US
THROUGH THE DAILY
READINGS.

READ **Philippians 3:4-8**

If you are not familiar with the Jewish tradition or the story of the Israelites in the Old Testament, Paul's words in Philippians 3 can be confusing or lacking in meaning. Here are a few notes to help you understand the meaning of the passage:

Why is he talking about circumcision?

Beginning with Abraham, God commands all males among His chosen people, the Israelites, to be circumcised eight days after birth. Now as the non-Jewish (Gentile) people started following Jesus and joining the church some of the Jews believed that they needed to be circumcised, too. Paul disputes this, but makes clear that he, too, can stake the claim as a lifetime Jew.

What does it matter what tribe he came from?

The tribe of Benjamin, v. 5—Paul can trace his spiritual lineage all the way back to the establishment of the twelve tribes of Israel. Benjamin was a favored tribe and produced the first king of Israel—Saul. It's possible that Paul/Saul was even named after him.

RESPOND

- What does it mean to have confidence in the flesh?
- How would Paul's religious accomplishments have "profited" him?
- Why does he consider them to be a loss? Were they wrong in themselves?
- The Pharisees were an elite sect of Judaism. Their name means "The Separated Ones." How do these verses show Paul's transformation from Pharisee to Christ-follower?

The Pharisees judged spiritual growth and maturity on the wrong things. What are some ways we fall into that same thing today?

CONTINUE HIS STORY

IN THIS SECTION, TALK ABOUT HOW YOU WILL APPLY WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED FROM THE SERMON, DAILY READINGS, AND GROUP STUDY/DISCUSSION.

READ Galatians 5:22-25

RESPOND

Which of these fruit do you feel God wants to grow or increase in you now?

What does it mean to crucify the flesh?

How do you keep in step with the Spirit?

READ Colossians 2:6-7

RESPOND

What are some ways you have become “rooted” in Christ these past weeks or months?

What is an area that you need to become more rooted in Christ?

LIVE IT OUT

THINK ABOUT PRACTICAL STEPS YOU CAN TAKE IN THE COMING WEEK TO LIVE OUT WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED.



DAY 15 **GOD'S HANDIWORK**

Gregg Svalstad

Ephesians 2:8-10

⁹For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Have you ever watched a potter, sculptor, or painter using their hands to create a work of art? Since I have zero artistic ability I am always amazed at what they can create with their skilled hands.

I am also amazed when I look at the work of God's handiwork throughout creation. The brilliance of the stars in the sky and the splendor of a colorful sunset. The magnificence of Half Dome in Yosemite or the beauty of the Oregon Coast. This year I had the opportunity to travel to Africa and to visit Victoria Falls and to go on a safari and encounter lions, elephants, giraffes and a whole host of God's creation in the wild. It is amazing to see the handiwork of God's skillful hands!

I don't know about you but I do not go through my daily living thinking about myself right there alongside sunsets, Half Dome, cheetahs and water falls on the list of God's unique amazing creations. Instead, I often look at the way God has created others, and the gifts that they have and I focus on what I am lacking and how that keeps me from being used by God.

In this passage we are reminded that we are God's handiwork. He created each of us as an original masterpiece. He created each of us with a God-given purpose and He did this to prepare us to do the good works that He prepared in advance for us to do. Take time to let that sink in. And begin to walk in agreement with the way God sees you and let Him show you the good works he specifically created you for.

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

DAY 16 **WHAT'S YOUR EXCUSE?**

Gregg Svalstad

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

As we look at the people God used who are recorded in the Bible, have you ever noticed that Abraham and Sarah were too old? Moses didn't speak well enough. Gideon was poor. Naomi was a widow. David had a moral failure and family problems. Jeremiah was too depressed. Peter was impulsive and hot tempered. The Samaritan woman had several failed marriages. Thomas had doubts. The list goes on and on. Each one had a reason that God wouldn't be able to use them in His service, but God used each one of them in His service for His purposes.

What about you? Are you involved in service or ministry? If not, what excuse have you been using? If you are like most people you probably think of yourself as having too many weaknesses to be used powerfully by God.

Everyone has weaknesses. Some are more obvious than others, but we all have a number of flaws and imperfections: physical, emotional, intellectual, relational and spiritual. Our natural response to our weaknesses is to defend them, excuse them, hide them, or resent them. We point to them as the reason that God cannot use us to display His power. In this passage, Paul turns that thinking upside-down when he says that he boasts and delights in his weaknesses and difficulties...because when he is weak, that is when he is strong—that is when God's power is expressed through him.

God is not surprised by our weakness. In fact, God loves to use flawed, weak people like you and me. He sees our weakness as an opportunity to demonstrate His power through us. God has never been impressed with strength or self-sufficiency. In fact, He does His most powerful work through people who are weak and admit it.

The next time Satan tries to bring you down by pointing out your weakness, take it as an opportunity to praise Jesus who understands all our weaknesses (Hebrews 4:1) and for the Holy Spirit who helps us in our weakness (Romans 8:26) and look for the way God wants to use your weakness to show His power.

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

DAY 17 WHO IS THE GREATEST?

Gregg Svalstad

Mark 9:33-35

They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the road?" But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest. Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all."

I remember in my childhood watching Mohammed Ali become the boxing champion of the world and his claims to be "the greatest." Many sports figures, politicians and business people are in the news as they strive for greatness and recognition.

Striving for greatness is not something new. Throughout history men and women have strived to be recognized for their greatness or significance. And we see in this passage that the disciples were no different as they argued about who was going to be the greatest. At one point they vied for whom would get to sit in the positions of power on the right and left of Jesus in His kingdom. But, they did not understand Jesus' kingdom. Jesus turned the world upside down and said, "whoever wants to be first must be last and be the servant of them all."

Jesus did not just use words to teach us about servant-hood. He demonstrated it throughout His life in ministry. There is no more poignant example of this than what He did on His last night with the disciples before His arrest.

John 13:3-5

³Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; ⁴so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. ⁵After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

Thousands of books have been written on leadership, but very few on servant hood. Everyone wants to lead; very few want to be servants. Tomorrow we will look at finding your unique God-given SHAPE for service. But remember God shaped you for service, not for self-centeredness. Without a servant's heart you will be tempted to use it as an excuse to exempt yourself from meeting the needs of others.

Your shape reveals your ministry, but your servant's heart reveals your maturity. Everyone can be a servant, no special gift or talent is required. All it requires is character.

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

DAY 18 **DISCOVERING YOUR SHAPE** Gregg Svalstad

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them.⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.⁶ There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit,⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit,¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

Before an architect designs a building they first ask, “What will be its purpose?” The same is true of you and me. Before God created you, He decided what role He wanted you to play on earth. He uniquely shaped you with gifts, personality, passions, temperament and experiences so that you could serve Him in a unique way.

How do we discover this unique shape that God has given us for service? There are many different assessments available to help you in this discovery process. If you have never done one of these assessments, we encourage you to utilize a free tool we have on our website:
purposechurch.com/life/spiritual-gifts-survey/.

We encourage you to take time today or tomorrow to use the assessment or to get out the information you have gained from previous assessments to grow in your understanding of your God given SHAPE for service.

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

DAY 19**USING WHAT GOD
GAVE YOU**

Gregg Svalstad

Romans 12:4-8

For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function,⁵ so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith;⁷ if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach;⁸ if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Did you take the SHAPE assessment or look over previous assessments you have done? Remember, no assessment is 100% accurate and they are not intended to pigeon hole you, rather as a tool to help you in the discovery process. Many people have found this assessment helpful in their process of discovery.

There are many other ways to discover how God has uniquely shaped you for service. Here are some suggestions:

Examine: Look for your natural tendencies, passions, burdens and interests. All of these can point you to your gifts.

Experiment: Seek opportunities to use these gifts.

Evaluate: Did your service bear spiritual fruit? Was God glorified? Were people edified? Ask people who know you best to give you feedback.

The important thing is that, whatever discovering we do, we use what God has given us for His purposes and His glory.

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

DAY 20 DON'T GROW WEARY

Gregg Svalstad

Galatians 6:9-10

⁹Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. ¹⁰Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

There are different types of “feeling tired” for me. The first type is the physical exhaustion I feel after a workout, sports competition or long hike. Or the mental, physical, and emotional exhaustion after completing a task, serving in ministry, finishing a long day of planning or experiencing a powerful time of worship. It is good to feel this kind of fatigue.

The second type is when I feel weary from working hard at something but not seeing any results. When I feel burned out from doing something that seems to have lost its purpose or meaning, or, when I feel that I have been swimming upstream against constant obstacles or opposition.

How about you? Are you tired or weary right now? Have you felt that way recently? If so, which kind of tired is it?

In this passage, Paul is not saying we shouldn't work hard and become physically, emotionally, or spiritually fatigued. He says in Colossians 3:23 “*whatever you do, work at it with all your heart.*” Rather he is saying, don't become weary in doing good, in serving. He says, if we are serving the Lord with all our hearts we may not see the fruit right now, but at the proper time we will see a harvest. We will see the fruit.

If you identify any feelings of weariness, burnout or fatigue, take them to God today.

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.



**EVERYONE
IS DESIGNED
TO SERVE**

SHARE YOUR STORY

AS WE SAID IN PREVIOUS WEEKS, SHARING OUR PERSONAL STORIES BUILDS DEEPER CONNECTIONS AMONG GROUP MEMBERS. YOUR STORY MAY BE EXACTLY WHAT ANOTHER PERSON IN YOUR GROUP NEEDS TO HEAR TO ENCOURAGE OR STRENGTHEN THEM AND YOUR LISTENING TO OTHER'S STORIES IS AN ACT OF LOVE AND KINDNESS TO THEM AND COULD VERY WELL HELP YOU BOTH TO GROW SPIRITUALLY.

Have you received great service from a company or business? How did it make you feel?

Describe one of your best moments or experiences you have had serving? What made it special?

Have someone in the group share a two-minute story of what their life was like when they weren't following Jesus and how Jesus changed their life.

Spend a few minutes catching up with your spiritual partner. If your partner is absent, or you don't have one yet, join with another pair or someone who doesn't yet have a partner. Share how your week has gone. Highs and lows? How have you been able to apply what you have been learning in RESTART? What struggle have you faced?

If you haven't established your spiritual partnerships yet, take some time to do it now. (See "Share Your Story" in Session 2 page 43)

LOOK TO GOD'S STORY

DOES SERVING OTHERS SEEM DEMEANING? GOD'S STORY IS SURPRISING BECAUSE HE TURNS THE WHOLE CONCEPTS OF "FIRST AND LAST", "GREATEST AND LEAST," UPSIDE DOWN. IF ANYONE HAD THE RIGHT TO THINK SERVING WAS BENEATH HIM IT WAS JESUS. YET HE BEGAN HIS LIFE BY HUMBLING HIMSELF TO COME TO EARTH AS A BABY HE HUMBLING HIMSELF AND SERVED THROUGHOUT HIS MINISTRY AND HE ENDED HIS LIFE BY GIVING HIS LIFE FOR US ON THE CROSS.

READ Acts 18:24-26

RESPOND

What gifts do you think Apollos had? What about Priscilla and Aquila?

Priscilla and Aquila could have easily been intimidated by Apollos because he was such a powerful speaker. And Apollos could have been too proud to learn from people who hadn't been given the same speaking gift. What do we learn about serving

from each of them in this account?

Notice that throughout the chapter whenever Priscilla and Aquila are listed, Priscilla is listed first. Considering the culture of that time, this is very significant because women had almost no social, religious, financial or political standing or influence. What does this tell you about Priscilla? Aquila? Apollos? Jesus' impact on culture?

STUDY NOTES

In New Testament times, people walked everywhere on dusty roads, going bare foot or wearing sandals, and their feet got very dirty. It was an expected part of hospitality that a host would provide a basin with water for guests to wash their own feet. In wealthy households a slave would perform this service. It was considered one of the most undignified, lowly tasks a servant would perform.

READ John 13:3-5 & 12-17
RESPOND

READ 1 Peter 4:10-11
RESPOND

How does using our gifts to serve help us to administer God's grace?

What promise is implied in verse 11 for those who serve?

What does the end of this passage remind us about the ultimate goal of our service?

READ James 4:10

What does it mean that God will lift us up if we humble ourselves to serve Him?

CONTINUE HIS STORY

IN THIS SECTION, TALK ABOUT HOW YOU WILL APPLY WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED FROM THE SERMON, DAILY READINGS, AND GROUP STUDY/DISCUSSION.

READ **Philippians 2:3-5**

RESPOND

What is one practical way that you can begin to consider the needs of others more this week?

Are there areas of selfishness or conceit you need to confess to God?

On Day 6, we read, "When we are serving the Lord, we will always be blessed at least as much as the people we are serving if not more". Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? Share about a time you experienced this.

What are some ways that serving helps us to grow in Christ?

If you completed the online assessment, or if you have taken another assessment in the past, bring your results to share with the group.

Instead of having people share their top rated gifts. Have some fun with it and before a person shares use the list (see appendix __ page __) and have everyone guess what each persons top gifts are and then have the person share to see how close the guesses were.

LIVE IT OUT

THINK ABOUT PRACTICAL STEPS YOU CAN TAKE IN THE COMING WEEK TO LIVE OUT WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED.

Groups grow closer when they serve together. Make plans to serve someone in need or participate together in a service project.



DAY 22 THE POWER

Lisa Toney

Romans 1:16

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.

Have you ever been ashamed of being a Christian? Okay, maybe that is a strong word.....maybe “shy” about being a Christian is easier to say. You know, you are the weird one that doesn’t fit in the room, at work, at school, at the party, with your family or friends?

Being a Christ-follower can sometimes feel awkward in our world today. Going against the flow is not easy.

God understands that! That is why God has equipped believers with the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul wrote in Romans 1:16 that the Gospel (the Good News of Jesus) is a powerful message. It is one that, when it is shared, has the power to bring hope and healing. Jesus has the power to change lives.

Salvation is not for only a select few. It is for anyone who believes in Jesus and calls upon his name! That is why we, at Purpose Church, are so passionate about our vision statement: Everyone, Everywhere, following Jesus.

Spend some time in prayer asking God to help you to be unashamed about the Gospel so that God’s power can flow through you to those you will encounter today.

Write about a time when it was hard for you to be the Christian in the room.

How would you do that experience differently now?

What do you think about God's POWER residing in you as a Christ-follower?

Who in your life needs this Good News? Write their names and then spend some time praying for them.

DAY 23 **ALWAYS BE READY**

Lisa Toney

1 Peter 3:15

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.

Where did you like to sit in classes or gatherings? Front row, back row or the middle? Where you sit often makes a difference in how engaged you are in the material being discussed. Being prepared always gives us more confidence to participate in something.

The call of 1 Peter 3:15 is to always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you about the hope that you have in your life. Being ready to do that simply means being honest about what God has done in your life. How has your life with Jesus brought change into your life? Do you live differently? Spend differently? Talk differently?

People are interested in why you are not motivated by the things of the world as much as other people. When you have placed your hope in Jesus, he gives you the ability to look at this world through His eyes.

The last part of that scripture calls us to do this with gentleness and respect. That means engaging with people in what they believe and not arguing with them or belittling them. Whenever someone treats you with respect and kindness, doesn't it make you like them more?

So plan to ask lots of questions. And listen. Ask some more questions. And listen some more. When your friend feels heard, they will be much more willing to listen to you too!

Spend some time in prayer asking God to prepare you for those you will encounter with gentleness and respect.

What is the hope that you have that is worth talking about?

How has this hope changed you?

Are you more likely to talk first or listen first?

Who comes to mind as someone that you ask more about what they believe and listen to them?

DAY 24 SHINING YOUR LIGHT

Lisa Toney

Matthew 5:14

You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.

Light can make all the difference. Have you ever arrived home at night to a dark home? You stumble with your keys and footing until you can find the light. The dark has a tendency to hide everything. In comparison, if you arrive and the light is on, you walk in feeling welcomed, able to navigate where you are going.

Jesus left us with such a powerful metaphor that Christ-followers are to be light in the world. They are to shine powerfully the radiance of Christ so that it lights up dark places. Just as a light can help you feel welcomed, our light is to shine as a welcome to others.

Welcoming others does not mean that they have to look like us, or act like us, or even believe as we do. Jesus invited people to follow him even before they knew his teachings. As Purpose Church seeks to be a church that encourages found people to find people, we want to be a welcoming presence to everyone. As they feel welcomed into our community, they will be able to walk much more comfortably into our midst and encounter Jesus.

Spend some time in prayer asking God to use you as light.

Where is a place that you always feel welcomed?

What makes you feel welcomed?

How could you welcome people who are new to Purpose Church?

Bring it to God in prayer.

DAY 25 **THE RIGHT MEASURE OF SALT** Lisa Toney

Matthew 5:13

You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

Salt makes everything taste better. I love me some salt. Salt is a tricky business though. Too much and the food is ruined, too little and it doesn't change anything. Salt needs just the right amount to enhance and make a food delicious.

One of the metaphors that Jesus gives us in scripture for us as Christians is that we are to be the salt of the earth. That means we are to help enhance people, relationships, situations, and life challenges with the hope, truth, love, and power of Christ.

Just like salt though, we must measure our approach and words to make sure they are helpful to the situation or person. Too much and a Christian can be a turn off, not enough and they don't see a difference.

This is where prayer and the Holy Spirit make all the difference. Both are so important and powerful to go before us. As you seek to influence your OIKOS for Jesus, do all things prayerfully asking God to lead the way and give you the words. God will show up and work and use you as the salt of the earth!

Spend some time in prayer asking God to use you as salt.

What is your favorite food to have salt on?

Have you ever seen someone pour Jesus on a situation that didn't seem helpful?

Who will you see today that you need to commit to prayer that God will use your heart, mind, and mouth for God's glory?

bring it to god in prayer.

DAY 26**REBELLIOUS HEART OR
OBEDIENT HANDS & FEET**

Lisa Toney

Matthew 28:19-20

¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Obedience is for dogs. Right? Teach them to sit, shake hands, and play dead. Good dog. Or maybe for kids! If only those kids would obey their parents!

Why is it that obedience always seems like a great idea for everyone except for us? Oh, my rebellious heart. Finding ways to rebel against....well just about anything give us a little sense of control and self importance. That is why the heart of the Christian faith is recognizing that Jesus' way is better than our own. We yield ourselves to what Jesus wants us to do rather than what we want to do.

Matthew 28 calls us to go to all people everywhere and share the hope of Christ. We are to disciple, baptize, and teach them. This is the heartbeat of our church. And as a church we are to be full of people who not only love Jesus but obey what he teaches us. That is what sets us apart from this world and models something different to our OIKOS. Our job is to obey Jesus and Jesus' job is to change lives.

Perhaps the most amazing part of these verses is the part that tells us that Jesus is with us always - to the very end. That means that Jesus is with us helping us every step of the way. We do not have to do it on our own. God himself walks alongside us encouraging and empowering us, by God's Spirit, to represent Jesus in this world. We are his hands and feet. We are his heart and mind. We are his mouth and presence to those around us.

Spend some time in prayer asking Jesus to give you a heart for all people everywhere and to model the reality of the power of God through obedience in your life.

When is a time that you chose to disobey something you were told to do.

What authorities are you least like to obey?

When have you obeyed Jesus and seen God work in a powerful way in your life?

How does obedience to Jesus in your own life reach those in your OIKOS?

DAY 27 CAN I GET A WITNESS?

Lisa Toney

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Have you ever been a witness to an accident? I once witnessed a horrible boat accident. I heard the collision. The boats came up on shore at our house. There was blood. There was cursing, there was alcohol, there were police and paramedics, and there was a lot of adrenaline. I was a kid and it was kind of scary. But the event is burned into my memory. I can still tell you specific details about the event that happened many years ago. One man broke one of our chairs when he sat in it. My mom had me go get a blanket for someone who was in shock and shaking and in shock – it was brown. When you are a witness, you see something, you experience it much more deeply than when someone only hears about it. That is why eyewitness testimony is so important in court cases.

This verse talks about how when the Holy Spirit is with us, the experience will be so powerful, so memorable, that Jesus wants us to be a witness – a witness that will be for all people, everywhere, and tell them about the reality of Jesus. Witnesses not only see something – but the event becomes emblazoned into their personhood because of the power of the event.

Jesus says you will receive power because you have witnessed the power of the Holy Spirit in your life. This power is to bring more people to Jesus. It is a power to go where you would not normally go. It is a power to say what you would not normally say. It is a power to do what you would not normally do...so that you can be a witness to a waiting world. Can I get a witness?

Spend some time in prayer asking God to fill you with God's power to make you a witness to those around you.

Have you ever witnessed an event that is emblazoned into your memory?

Where have you seen the power of the Holy Spirit in your life?

What do you think God wants to do through you by God's power?

How would you describe God's power in your life to someone who was curious how you live life as you do?



**FOUND PEOPLE
FIND PEOPLE**

SHARE YOUR STORY

AS WE SAID IN PREVIOUS WEEKS, SHARING OUR PERSONAL STORIES BUILDS DEEPER CONNECTIONS AMONG GROUP MEMBERS. YOUR STORY MAY BE EXACTLY WHAT ANOTHER PERSON IN YOUR GROUP NEEDS TO HEAR TO ENCOURAGE OR STRENGTHEN THEM AND YOUR LISTENING TO OTHER'S STORIES IS AN ACT OF LOVE AND KINDNESS TO THEM AND COULD VERY WELL HELP YOU BOTH TO GROW SPIRITUALLY.

Describe a time when you ate at a restaurant or saw a movie that you couldn't wait to tell everyone about and couldn't stop talking about.

Who was it that God used to bring you to follow Jesus or bring you back to Jesus? What did they do?

Have someone in the group share a two-minute story of what their life was like when they weren't following Jesus and how Jesus changed their life.

Spend a few minutes catching up with your spiritual partner. If your partner is absent, or you don't have one yet, join with another pair or someone who doesn't yet have a partner. Share how your week has gone. Highs and lows? How have you been able to apply what you have been learning in RESTART? What struggle have you faced?

If you haven't established your spiritual partnerships yet, take some time to do it now. (See "Share Your Story" in Session 2, page 43).

LOOK TO GOD'S STORY

THE FOLLOWING PASSAGES AND QUESTIONS WILL GUIDE OUR DISCUSSION AS WE SHARE WHAT GOD HAS REVEALED TO US THROUGH THE DAILY READINGS.

STUDY NOTES

We can't know for sure, but it is likely that the Ethiopian Eunuch was originally a lower class worker who chose to be castrated so he could work in the royal courts. Some of these jobs required men to become Eunuchs so they could never father children or "pollute" the royal bloodline. The Greek word "Eunochos" literally means "bed keeper". If this is true he would have chosen to give up everything including the option to have his own family so that he could advance his career.

Regardless of how he came into his position, he appears to be reading the Jewish scriptures—from what would have been a very expensive scroll—

trying to make sense of it in order to find meaning in life.

READ Acts 8:26-36 RESPOND

Whether his physical condition (as a eunuch) was through choice or through birth, this Eunuch would have been considered by the Jews to be unfit to join in with God's people (see Deuteronomy 23:1). In light of this, what is the significance that God sends Philip specifically to find this person?

What exactly does the Spirit instruct Philip to do? What does he do? Is he being obedient? Why or why not?

The passage in Isaiah the Eunuch was reading was understood to be a prophecy about the Messiah. What things in this passage could Philip have pointed out to the Eunuch to tell him about Jesus?

How is Philip's experience in John 1:43-49 with Nathanael similar to his experience with the Ethiopian here?

God orchestrated this whole event and led Philip to this conversation in order to save this one man. What does this tell us about the lengths God will go to reach each individual? What does it tell us about what lengths He wants us to go?

In Acts 18, an Angel of the Lord and the Holy Spirit both played a role in helping Philip "find" the Eunuch. Today, we may not hear an angel speak, but the Holy Spirit still helps found people find people. What are some practical ways that you can be listening and responding to the Spirit's promptings to "find people" in your life?

CONTINUE HIS STORY

IN THIS SECTION, TALK ABOUT HOW YOU WILL APPLY WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED FROM THE SERMON, DAILY READINGS, AND GROUP STUDY/DISCUSSION.

READ Romans 10:12-15

RESPOND

READ 1 Peter 3:15

RESPOND

Do you feel prepared in this way?

In what ways do you want to grow in this area?

READ Matthew 9:37-38

RESPOND

What does Jesus mean that the “harvest is plentiful”?

LIVE IT OUT

THINK ABOUT PRACTICAL STEPS YOU CAN TAKE IN THE COMING WEEK TO LIVE OUT WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED.

Do you have an oikos list you are praying for? What is a next step for you to BLESS each one on the list?

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DAY 29 ONE GENEROUS FAMILY

Nancy Matarita

Acts 4:32-37

³² All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. ³³ With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all³⁴ that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales³⁵ and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.³⁶ Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"),³⁷ sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

Hundreds of children in the village surrounding Living Waters Baptist in Lusaka, Zambia, go without school, without shoes and without food. Purpose Church began partnering with Living Waters and their vision of building a school where children would receive a quality education, a nutritious lunch, life skills and Christian values. Big visions take big resources and they knew that with their own limited resources this would be a ten year plan, meaning many children would miss out on the benefits of this grand undertaking. During the first two years, they procured the land, laid out and dug for the foundation and waited as they struggled to raise funds to construct the rest, little by little over the next eight years.

One family of Purpose Church heard of this dream to build a school and make a difference in their community through education. Selling a portion of what they owned, they gave enough to complete the building of the school. Purpose Baptist Christian Academy in Zambia opened to several hundred happy children on January 16, 2017, seven years before the projected finish date, thanks to this generous gift. This generous gift of one family has transformed the world for 100's of families and children in Zambia

Generous people at Purpose Church are transforming the world, one Zambian student at a time through education, nutrition and the Word of God. This is just one story of one family following the example of Barnabas, sharing what they had been given for the work of Christ throughout the world.

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

DAY 30 THE DIFFERENCE OF A DOLLAR

Nancy Matarita

Mark 12:41-44

⁴¹ Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. ⁴² But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents.

⁴³ Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. ⁴⁴ They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on."

You have been inspired by yesterday's story of a family who transformed the world for children in Zambia through their generosity. Perhaps you are inspired but thinking, "how can the little bit I have to give actually make any difference in the world?"

We learn from this passage in Mark that Jesus is not concerned with how much we have to give. He is not comparing what we give to what others give. Rather He cares about the condition of our hearts, where our treasures are, and if we are going to put Him first in the area of our finances. When we do this, even we give a small amount out of poverty rather than large amounts out of our wealth, God takes our gifts and uses them for His purposes.

Every dollar you give to Purpose Church makes a difference. When you give any amount to Purpose Church a portion of that money goes to provide food and assistance to the needy right here in the surrounding community, it helps to support a young girl rescued from human trafficking, it gives clean water to a village in Thailand, assistance and the gospel to refugees in Lebanon, street children in Laos, and so much more.

But what if I only have a dollar to give? Do you know that with our ministry partners in India, one dollar per child enables them to bring vacation Bible school to a village? The children have fun learning about Jesus and God's love, and many receive Jesus and share Him with their families.

But there is more! This dollar investment goes even further as mothers are invited to literacy classes where they, too, learn about Jesus and are empowered to better their family life through Christ's love and by the lessons taught on nutrition, hygiene, relationships and finances. As these mothers receive Jesus, they share with husbands and family and so a new church is planted.

Yes, that one little dollar goes a long way to make a big difference. The poor widow gladly gave her all to the glory of God, oblivious to the tremendous impact her generous example would have through many generations. Even today, we see Jesus' heart as he recognizes that she "put more into the treasury than all the others" and her two copper coins continue to inspire us to invest for greater kingdom impact as our generosity transforms the world.

what is God saying to you?

what does it mean to you?

what action step do you need to take?

bring it to god in prayer.

DAY 31 **HOW DO WE TRUST THE LORD** Peter Torry**Proverbs 3:5-12**

*5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
6 in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight.[a]
7 Do not be wise in your own eyes;
fear the LORD and shun evil.
8 This will bring health to your body
and nourishment to your bones.
9 Honor the LORD with your wealth,
with the firstfruits of all your crops;
10 then your barns will be filled to overflowing,
and your vats will brim over with new wine.*

Proverbs 3:5-6 are very familiar verses and often quoted. They provide a conditional promise. When we trust in the Lord, lean not on our understanding and submit our ways to Him, then He will make our paths straight. This is a wonderful promise of His guidance. But there is a question to ask. How do we trust in the Lord? How do we not lean on our own understanding? How do we submit to the Lord?

The answers come in the next six verses. In answer to the question, “how do we not lean on our own understanding?” the answer is in verse 7. “Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil.” Simply put, don’t be arrogant and stay away from anything that looks like it is evil. The “straight path” that results is health and nourishment.

In answer to the question of how to trust in the Lord, the answer comes in verse 9: “Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops.” This is a powerful verse that offers some very challenging instruction. To honor the Lord with our wealth by giving Him the firstfruits of our income is an expression of trust. Often we want to give to God the last of our increase – whatever is left over. But that is not trust! When Israel went into the promised land God did not tell them to conquer ten cities and then give him the spoils of the last city. God asked for the spoils of the first city – an act of faith on the part of the people of Israel. And for us today, God asks of us to give the firstfruits – the first tenth of our income – not the last. And then the “straight paths” that result from this are barns filled to overflowing and vats brimming over with new wine. God simply says, “Trust me by giving me your firstfruits and I will take care of you.”

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

**DAY 32 HE WILL ENLARGE
YOUR HARVEST**

Peter Torry

2 Corinthians 9:6-11

⁶ Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷ Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ 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. ⁹ As it is written:

*“They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor;
their righteousness endures forever.”^[a]*

¹⁰ Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹ You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

Do you want to transform the world? There is an interesting phrase in verse 10; “he . . . will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.” What would a harvest of righteousness look like? I think it would be transformational. People who would see your righteousness would become your harvest. Throughout the Bible, the harvest consistently is symbolic of people coming into a faith relationship with Jesus. Your righteousness can produce this harvest. All of this is written in the context of sowing generously! And it is clear from the context that generous sowing is referring to giving.

So here is the chain: you decide in your heart to give (and to give cheerfully) – God blesses abundantly – you then have everything you need to abound in every good work – then God (who gave the resources, the seed, etc.) will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. And, even on top of all of that, God then restates for emphasis that He will enrich you in every way so that you can continue to be generous on every occasion.

If you want to be generous on every occasion – sow, give, and do it with cheerfulness!

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

DAY 33 **ROBBING GOD?**

Peter Torry

Malachi 3:6-12

⁶ “I the LORD do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed.
⁷ Ever since the time of your ancestors you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you,” says the LORD Almighty.
 “But you ask, ‘How are we to return?’
⁸ “Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me.
 “But you ask, ‘How are we robbing you?’
 “In tithes and offerings. ⁹ You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,” says the LORD Almighty.
¹² “Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,” says the LORD Almighty.

This might be a familiar passage for many and it might be a favorite for some (like Dave Ramsey). But for others it is a troubling passage. It clearly teaches that God is asking us to bring the tithe into the storehouse. In today’s language, it means that we are to bring ten percent (the tithe) to the church. God is very clear. Not doing this is robbing God! Please forgive me for being so blunt, but if you read this passage honestly, you have to accept that this is what God is saying.

Some people argue that the tithe is Old Testament and does not apply to us today. But notice how God begins the dialogue in this passage. Through the prophet, Malachi, he says to Israel, “I the Lord do not change.” If God does not change then He is the same in the New Testament as He is in the Old Testament. And, think about it for a moment. There are many principles in the Old Testament that we accept as being true for us today as New Testament believers. Does anyone ever want to make the argument that because “thou shall not steal” is in the Old Testament that it is OK to steal today? Obviously not! What is written in the Old Testament has instruction for us today and we ignore it to our peril.

Fortunately, there is a two-fold promise if we are obedient and bring our tithe into the storehouse. First, is that we will be individually blessed. We will receive so much blessing that we will not have enough room to contain it. That is wonderful, but there is more. In verse 12 we read that “all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land.” A faithful Israel demonstrated to the world what it meant to be blessed by God. And faithful tithers have a similar impact – they demonstrate to the world what it means to be blessed by God!

What is God saying to you?

What does it mean to you?

What action step do you need to take?

Bring it to God in prayer.

DAY 34 **BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING** Peter Torry**2 Chronicles 31:4-10**

⁴ He ordered the people living in Jerusalem to give the portion due the priests and Levites so they could devote themselves to the Law of the LORD. ⁵ As soon as the order went out, the Israelites generously gave the firstfruits of their grain, new wine, olive oil and honey and all that the fields produced. They brought a great amount, a tithe of everything. ⁶ The people of Israel and Judah who lived in the towns of Judah also brought a tithe of their herds and flocks and a tithe of the holy things dedicated to the LORD their God, and they piled them in heaps. ⁷ They began doing this in the third month and finished in the seventh month. ⁸ When Hezekiah and his officials came and saw the heaps, they praised the LORD and blessed his people Israel.

⁹ Hezekiah asked the priests and Levites about the heaps; ¹⁰ and Azariah the chief priest, from the family of Zadok, answered, "Since the people began to bring their contributions to the temple of the LORD, we have had enough to eat and plenty to spare, because the LORD has blessed his people, and this great amount is left over."

Let me quote from Robert Morris in his book *The Blessed Life*.

"The gist of this passage is this: When God's people began to tithe, God began to bless them even more. The more they were blessed, the larger their tithes grew. This upward cycle of blessing and abundance resulted in heaps of goods and food in God's house.

"When Hezekiah came and saw the heaps, he basically said, 'Explain this to me; are the people doing okay? They have given so much!' And the priests said something like, 'You need to understand something King. Since the people began to tithe, God has blessed them. What you see here is the tithe of the abundance with which God has blessed them.'"

"This passage illustrates the two parallel results of tithing. It blesses God's people, but it also brings provision into God's house. Remember what God said in Malachi: "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house. (3:10, emphasis added). King Hezekiah commanded the people to bring in the tithe so that the priests might devote themselves to studying the Word of God.

Can you imagine what the Body of Christ could accomplish if every believer tithed? What kind of impact the Church could have on our culture and on cultures around the world if the heaps would begin to accumulate in our houses of worship?"

The simple fact is that if every believer tithed we would never have to make any special appeal for any special offerings. We would be able to make an impact locally and around the world. In fact, we would be looking for ways that we could invest in more and more ministry because we would have “heaps” in our storehouse!

what is God saying to you?

what does it mean to you?

what action step do you need to take?

bring it to god in prayer.



**GENEROUS PEOPLE
TRANSFORM THE WORLD**

SHARE YOUR STORY

WHAT CAN YOU SHARE FROM YOUR STORY THIS WEEK THAT MIGHT BE EXACTLY WHAT ANOTHER PERSON IN YOUR GROUP NEEDS TO HEAR TO ENCOURAGE OR STRENGTHEN THEM? SHARE OPENLY WITH YOUR GROUP TO CONTINUE TO DEEPEN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS THIS WEEK.

- Share about a time when the generosity of someone else touched your life

Have someone in the group share a two-minute story of what their life was like when they weren't following Jesus and how Jesus changed their life.

Spend a few minutes catching up with your spiritual partner. If your partner is absent, or you don't have one yet, join with another pair or someone who doesn't yet have a partner.

Open up to page ___ and share about the people you have on your 8-15 list and any opportunities you had to BLESS them.

If you haven't established your spiritual partnerships yet, take some time to do it now. (See "Share Your Story" in Session 2, page 43).

LOOK TO GOD'S STORY

WHY DO WE SPEND TIME THIS WEEK TALKING ABOUT MONEY? THE REASON IS THAT JESUS TALKED A LOT ABOUT MONEY. HE TALKED ABOUT MONEY MORE THAN FAITH AND PRAYER. HE KNEW THE POWER MONEY CAN HAVE IN OUR LIVES AND HOW IT CAN HELP US ACCOMPLISH GOD'S PURPOSE. LET'S BEGIN BY LOOKING AT HIS TEACHING FROM MATTHEW 6.

READ Matthew 6:1-4

RESPOND

- How do these verses challenge or encourage you in the area of generous giving?

READ Matthew 6:19-21, 24

RESPOND

- What alternatives does Jesus propose with respect to treasures (vv. 19-21)? Masters (v. 24)?
- What is the link between treasure and heart? Master and money?

READ Matthew 6:25-34

RESPOND

- What is the most challenging part of this passage for you? Why?
- What is the most encouraging part of this passage for you? Why?
- How does this challenge or encourage you?
- How well do your current practices of handling your finances align with v. 33-34? What are some ways you need to grow?

CONTINUE HIS STORY

IN THIS SECTION. TALK ABOUT HOW YOU WILL APPLY WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED FROM THE SERMON, DAILY READINGS, AND GROUP STUDY/DISCUSSION.

READ **Luke 6:38**

RESPOND

What has been your experience with giving and tithing?

What gets in the way of you being a regular, faithful giver?

READ **Luke 12:15**

RESPOND

What is the area of your life or finances where you have to “be on guard” so greed or coveting doesn’t take over?

What else gets in the way of increasing your generosity in giving?

LIVE IT OUT

THINK ABOUT PRACTICAL STEPS YOU CAN TAKE IN THE COMING WEEK TO LIVE OUT WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED.

What was your response to the readings on Day 36 and Day 37 about how generous people at Purpose Church are transforming the world?



DAY 36 **WHAT HAVE YOU SEEN
IN THE MIRROR?**

Gregg Svalstad

James 1:22-25

²²Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

²³Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror²⁴and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. ²⁵But 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.

Have you ever gotten home or looked in a mirror after hours of interacting with people only to find out that your hair was doing something weird, you had a mark on your face, or you had something very noticeable in your teeth? Don't you hate that!?

James describes that the Bible serves as a “mirror” for us showing us when something is not right in our lives. These past 35 days God has been revealing your “face,” your life in the “mirror.” As you have read and responded to the Bible each day, and as you have met with your Life Group, God has been shining His light into your lives to help you see Him and see yourself more clearly.

The only thing worse than going through a day and not seeing or knowing that something was wrong, is seeing and knowing that something is wrong and then going through the day without doing anything about it. James warns us not to be like this when it comes to our life in Christ.

As we go through this last week of RESTART we want to take time to reflect on what God has been revealing to us through the readings and our Life Group sessions so that we don't just walk away and forget.

Take some time each day this week to look back over the previous weeks to review and thank God for what He has shown you and ask Him to bring back to mind the things that He wants you to do in the days and weeks ahead so that this RESTART will make a lasting impact on your life.

Take time today to review days 1-7 about Better Together to see what you highlighted in the readings and what you wrote in the journal pages and the Live It Out section on page 27.

A large rectangular area with a thick gray border, containing horizontal lines for writing. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the box, providing a space for a student to write their reflections on the previous days' work.

DAY 37

Take time today to review days 8-14 about Growing People Change to see what you highlighted in the readings and what you wrote in the journal pages and the Live It Out section on page 45.

A large rectangular area with a light gray border and horizontal lines, intended for journaling or writing. The area is empty and occupies most of the page below the text.

DAY 38

Take time today to review days 15-21 about Everyone Is Designed to Serve to see what you highlighted in the readings and what you wrote in the journal pages and the Live It Out section on page 63.

A large rectangular area with a thick gray border, containing 25 horizontal lines for journaling. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the box, leaving a small margin from the right and bottom edges.

DAY 40 PRACTICE MAKES...

Gregg Svalstad

Philippians 4:8-9

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.

We have all heard the saying “practice makes perfect”. Although we all fall short of perfection and no matter how much we practice we will never attain it, we know that practice is vitally important in every area of our lives. Athletes know that the only way to succeed individually and as a team is through practice. Artists, musicians and chefs become excellent in their craft through practice. None of us would want to have a dentist or a doctor operating on us before they had undergone sufficient training and practice. The same is true in our spiritual lives. It is not enough to just read, hear, or learn about what God wants for our lives. We need to put it into practice.

We began RESTART with John 10:10 where Jesus says, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” Satan wants to take what you experienced during these 40 days and steal, kill, and destroy it all. But Jesus came and defeated Satan once and for all so that you might have life and have it to the full!

The path to life to the full, to the powerful presence and peace of God is practice. Like any practice, it doesn’t mean we get it right the first time or every time. But the path to lasting change is through dwelling on what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely and admirable, on what is excellent and praiseworthy and then putting it into practice so that we experience the God of peace powerfully present in our lives.

WHAT HAS GOD SHOWN YOU HE WANTS YOU TO PRACTICE?

WHAT ARE THE “PRACTICES” YOU HAVE USED DURING THESE 40 DAYS THAT HAVE HELPED YOU GROW?

THINK ABOUT EACH PERSON IN YOUR GROUP. WHAT IS A SPECIFIC AFFIRMATION YOU CAN GIVE TO THEM OF A WAY YOU HAVE SEEN THEM GROW OR A WAY THEY HAVE ENCOURAGED OR HELPED YOU TO GROW.



LIVING IT OUT

SHARE YOUR STORY

PREPARE TO SHARE
OPENLY ABOUT WHAT
GOD HAS SHOWN YOU
DURING THIS SERIES.

Have someone in the group share a two-minute story of what their life was like when they weren't following Jesus and how Jesus changed their life.

What has been a highlight for you during the past 40 days?

What has been a struggle for you during the past 40 days?

LOOK TO GOD'S STORY

READ James 1:22-25

CONTINUE HIS STORY

IN THIS SECTION, TALK ABOUT HOW YOU WILL APPLY WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED FROM THE SERMON, DAILY READINGS, AND GROUP STUDY/DISCUSSION.

READ **Philippians 4:8-9**

As you look back over the 40 days during this week, what has God revealed to you or what does He want you to put into practice:

- From days 1-7 Better Together?
- From days 8-14 Growing People Change?
- From days 15-21 Everyone Is Designed to Serve?
- From days 22-28 Found People Find People?
- From days 29-35 Generous People Transform the World?

CLOSING

- Take turns sharing about the difference this series has made in your life:

40 Days ago, I _____.

Today, I _____.

- Prepare to close your time with communion and/or a time of praise and worship.

SPIRITUAL PARTNERS

MY NAME

SPIRITUAL PARTNER'S NAME

	OUR PLAN	OUR PROGRESS
WEEK 1		
WEEK 2		
WEEK 3		
WEEK 4		
WEEK 5		
WEEK 6		

DISCOVER YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS!

by Gene Wilkes

Ken Hemphill defines a spiritual gift as “an individual manifestation of grace from the Father that enables you to serve Him and thus play a vital role in His plan for the redemption of the world.”¹ Peter Wagner defines a spiritual gift as “a special attribute given by the Holy Spirit to every member of the Body of Christ according to God’s grace for use within the context of the Body.”² I like to use this definition:

A spiritual gift is an expression of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers which empowers them to serve the body of Christ, the church.

Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30; Ephesians 4:11; and 1 Peter 4:9-11 contain representative lists of gifts and roles God has given to the church. A definition of these gifts follows.³

- **Leadership**—Leadership aids the body by leading and directing members to accomplish the goals and purposes of the church. Leadership motivates people to work together in unity toward common goals (Rom. 12:8).
- **Administration**—Persons with the gift of administration lead the body by steering others to remain on task. Administration enables the body to organize according to God-given purposes and long-term goals (1 Cor. 12:28).
- **Teaching**—Teaching is instructing members in the truths and doctrines of God’s Word for the purposes of building up, unifying, and maturing the body (1 Cor. 12:28; Rom. 12:7; Eph. 4:11).
- **Knowledge**—The gift of knowledge manifests itself in teaching and training in discipleship. It is the God-given ability to learn, know, and explain the precious truths of God’s Word. A word of knowledge is a Spirit-revealed truth (1 Cor. 12:28).
- **Wisdom**—Wisdom is the gift that discerns the work of the Holy Spirit in the body and applies His teachings and actions to the needs of the body (1 Cor. 12:28).
- **Prophecy**—The gift of prophecy is proclaiming the Word of God boldly. This builds up the body and leads to conviction of sin. Prophecy manifests itself in preaching and teaching (1 Cor. 12:10; Rom. 12:6).
- **Discernment**—Discernment aids the body by recognizing the true intentions of those within or related to the body. Discernment tests the message and actions of others for the protection and well-being of the body (1 Cor. 12:10).

- **Exhortation**—Possessors of this gift encourage members to be involved in and enthusiastic about the work of the Lord. Members with this gift are good counselors and motivate others to service. Exhortation exhibits itself in preaching, teaching, and ministry (Rom. 12:8).
- **Shepherding**—The gift of shepherding is manifested in persons who look out for the spiritual welfare of others. Although pastors, like shepherds, do care for members of the church, this gift is not limited to a pastor or staff member (Eph. 4:11).
- **Faith**—Faith trusts God to work beyond the human capabilities of the people. Believers with this gift encourage others to trust in God in the face of apparently insurmountable odds (1 Cor. 12:9).
- **Evangelism**—God gifts his church with evangelists to lead others to Christ effectively and enthusiastically. This gift builds up the body by adding new members to its fellowship (Eph. 4:11).
- **Apostleship**—The church sends apostles from the body to plant churches or be missionaries. Apostles motivate the body to look beyond its walls in order to carry out the Great Commission (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11).
- **Service/Helps**—Those with the gift of service/helps recognize practical needs in the body and joyfully give assistance to meeting those needs. Christians with this gift do not mind working behind the scenes (1 Cor. 12:28; Rom. 12:7).
- **Mercy**—Cheerful acts of compassion characterize those with the gift of mercy. Persons with this gift aid the body by empathizing with hurting members. They keep the body healthy and unified by keeping others aware of the needs within the church (Rom. 12:8).
- **Giving**—Members with the gift of giving give freely and joyfully to the work and mission of the body. Cheerfulness and liberality are characteristics of individuals with this gift (Rom. 12:8).
- **Hospitality**—Those with this gift have the ability to make visitors, guests, and strangers feel at ease. They often use their home to entertain guests. Persons with this gift integrate new members into the body (1 Pet. 4:9).

God has gifted you with an expression of His Holy Spirit to support His vision and mission of the church. It is a worldwide vision to reach all people with the gospel of Christ. As a servant leader, God desires that you know how He has gifted you. This will lead you to where He would have you serve as part of His vision and mission for the church.

FINDING YOUR PLACE TO SERVE

These are some examples of the different opportunities to serve here at Purpose Church

Guest Services

- Greeters & Ushers
- Connect Center
- Parking Greeters

Prayer/Pastoral Care

- Sunday morning prayer team
- Hospital & homebound visitation

Media/Technology

- Photo/Video
- Audio Visual/Lighting
- Camera Ops
- Graphic Design
- Social Media

Property & Facility

- Painting
- Cleaning
- Repair & Maintenance

Administration

- Data input
- Bulletin Assembly
- Receptionist
- Office Support

Campus Safety

- Parking
- Medical
- Security

Celebration Arts

- Celebration Choir & Orchestra
- Worship Team
- Band instrument

Children's Ministries

- Nursery & Toddlers
- Preschool & Elementary
- Special needs children
- Check-in greeting
- AWANA Wednesday nights

Students (5th – 12th grades)

- Small group leaders
- Meals and snacks
- Trips or event support
- Spiritual Grandparents
- Help with events

Community Outreach/Service

- Clothing Room-Tuesday mornings
- Serving for Saturday homeless meal
- Cookies for Saturday homeless meal
- Afterschool elementary tutors

Helping Hands for Senior Adults/Widows

- Home Repair
- Outside Yard Work
- Inside Housework

Transportation

- Bus/Van Driver
(Sundays, trips, youth)

Justice Ministries

- Freedom Bag work day
- Special Events
- Compile Outreach Packs

Special Events

- Easter at the Fairplex
- VBS
- Journey to Bethlehem
- Come Celebrate Christmas
- Christmas Set - Up

WHO MAKES UP YOUR 8-15?

Relatives
Friends
Neighbors
Work Associates
Classmates
others

First, list your "oikos," those 8-15 people with whom you interact regularly.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____

BLESS Your 8-15

Use this acrostic to help you develop an intentional rhythm of sharing your faith with your oikos.

- B** - Begin by PRAYING daily for each one.
- L** - LISTEN, LOOK for, and LEARN about their NEEDS.
- E** - EAT. Invite them for a meal, meet for coffee, etc.
- S** - SERVE. Look for practical ways to serve their needs.
- S** - SHARE your story and your faith, invite them to church.

RESTART

