

# Seeking God's Face

FOR THE CHURCH

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30 Days Devotion Journal

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## *From The Pastor's Heart*



Dear brothers and sisters,

We've assigned 2024 as a period for rest, reflection, and tuning into God's message for our church. So, for the next 30 days, inviting you to seek God's voice and heartbeat as we use this devotion material.

This 30-day devotional content is centered on several key ideas:

- Take time to contemplate your personal spiritual journey, assessing where you currently stand in your relationship with God, recognizing that revival within the church starts with each individual's journey.
- As a member of TPCMC, consider what challenges God is presenting to you and what personal breakthroughs you aspire to achieve through your commitment to God.
- Explore the essence of being a church community and think about what are the areas that we want to give thanks? What are the areas to work on?

I encourage you to spend time in God's presence and earnestly seek His guidance: What messages is God saying to you regarding your life and our church?

We're excited to hear your reflections on the insights that the Holy Spirit has for you. Please take the time to journal your thoughts, and we'll follow up with you to collectively shape the direction of the church for the next six years.


Ps Helen Hoe


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## Before You Begin


 **Set aside dedicated time:** Choose a specific time each day for your devotion and reflection.

 **Create a sacred space:** Find a quiet and comfortable space where you won't be disturbed. It could be a corner of a room, a cushion, or a chair where you feel at ease.

 **Prepare your heart:** Spend a few minutes in silent contemplation. Some helpful tips: you may close your eyes, focus on your breath and clear distracting thoughts or pray a short prayer, eg: Holy Spirit, help me open my heart.

 **Take Your Time:** Take time to read the scripture for the day. Slowly. For a few times. Next read the passage slowly. Jot down the words and phrases that caught your attention.

 **Reflect on your experiences:** Take time to reflect on those words. As you read through the reflection questions, it may draw a blank at first but be patient and remain open to the guidance of the Spirit as you contemplate them. Journaling can be a powerful tool for this process. Write down your reflections, thoughts, and any messages you feel you've received.

 **End with a prayer:** Approach God just as you are, whether to express gratitude or to share your struggle and innermost thoughts. Ask for strength as you dedicate yourself to God.

*When You said, "Seek My face," my heart said to You, "Your face, O Lord, I shall seek." (Ps 27:8)*

Seeking God's face is synonymous with seeking God's presence.

In Psalm 105:4, God's faithful ones were called to "seek his face always." Even if we have not abandoned God, there are times when we neglect to pursue Him. The Lord wants us to humbly and trustingly seek His face in our prayers and in His Word. It requires intimacy to look intently into someone's face.

Pursuing God's face is equivalent to developing an intimate relationship with Him: *"O God, you are my God; I earnestly search for you. My soul thirsts for you; my whole body longs for you in this parched and weary land where there is no water. I have seen you in your sanctuary and gazed upon your power and glory. Your unfailing love is better than life itself; how I praise you!"* (Psalm 63:1–3). It involves repentance: God told Solomon, *"If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land"* (2 Chronicles 7:14).

When we sought him, having God's face smile on us is an expression of His blessing, love, and favor: *"May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you"*.

Today, let's seek God's face in this crowded, noisy world.

For our lives, for our church: to reflect and repent; to have His presence with us.

**Reflection** 

How badly do you long to see God's face?

What is God saying to you about your life or church life? What is your response?

*He says, “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.” (Ps 46:10–11)*

Psalm 46 was written during the time when Hezekiah, one of the great Kings of Judah was besieged by the Assyrian King Sennacherib (2 Kings 18, Isaiah 36). We hear that King Sennacherib marched into Judah and captured all the fortified cities surrounding Jerusalem until that great city, the City of David, was all that remained. He sends this message to the King of Judah and the people of Jerusalem:

“Do not listen to Hezekiah. This is what the king of Assyria says: Make peace with me and come out to me. Choose life and not death! “Do not listen to Hezekiah, for he is misleading you when he says, ‘The Lord will deliver us.’ (2 Kings 18:31–32)

King Hezekiah had advisors, politicians, prophets, priests and normal citizens. Maybe everyone was giving conflicting advice and suggestion, who would he listen to? As true as this is for Hezekiah, it is true for us. So, who do we listen to? For the Psalmist, for Hezekiah, and for anyone who sought to follow Jesus in their lives, the answer is very very simple, but often difficult – “Be still and know that I am God.”

In the busyness of life, when your soul feels rushed, the Psalmist says to stop and know that God is God and you are not! On one hand, stop worrying, stop running all over the place. On the other hand, don't give up and say “no-point, what difference does it make?” Find rest and direction in God's presence, for strength and his good provision in every situation.



**Reflection** 

Amidst numerous obligations and constant distractions, we must tune in to the still, small voice of the Spirit. What are the noises that you need to set aside? What do you want to commit to God?

What is God saying to you about your life or church life? What is your response?

*Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain (1 Cor 15:1-2)*

An old mentor of mine used a phrase that I have found over the years to be very helpful. “Spiritual Amnesia.” This condition of spiritual amnesia is both humbling and frightening. How can one so easily forget how great our God is? Spiritual amnesia is not a new problem. It becomes clear when looking all the way back to Adam and Eve’s lack of trust to the Israelites wandering in the desert to Peter’s denial and fear. Judges 8:34 summed it up: “Thus the sons of Israel did not remember the Lord their God, who had delivered them from the hands of all their enemies on every side.”

If we are honest with ourselves, we often judged the Israelites when reading the OT passages. How could they so quickly turn away from God? Paul wanted the Corinthians to remember the basic message of Christ. Often, we get caught up in the business of ministry, and the implication and impact of the Gospel is lost on us. Or, how easily we contract spiritual amnesia when things don’t go our way or take longer than we anticipate. We look around at the mess of this world, and we get discouraged. We forget who God is, what He has done, and what He has promised.

**Reflection** 

What are some ways you forget or lose interest in the Gospel? How does that show in your life or in the life of church? Ask God to test and examine your heart and forgive you for all the moments you've forgotten who He is and the power with which He's empowered you to become who you are.

What is God saying to you about your life or church life? What is your response?

*For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again (2 Cor 5:14-15)*

What drives you? What gets you up in the morning to live? Perhaps many of us may have never thought about this question. Many of us just go with life. But for the Christian, there is something else that compels us: God's love.

Paul writes that the love of God compels us. It is something that occupies Paul's thoughts and urges him to do something. God's love is not something that we just enjoy by ourselves. Rather, after experiencing God's love for us on the cross, this love motivates us to trust his love for us and respond to it.

How does this love motivate us? It motivates us in two ways. First, we are set free from our old way of life or "died" to it and set free to live a new life. We have died to our old way of living and the fears of our old lifestyle: fear of losing people's approval or affection, fear of losing the things we have in life, fear of an unknown future. But Christ died and rose again for our sin. We are truly set free. But what are we set free for?

Paul writes, "he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but for him who for their sake died and was raised (v15)." God's love motivates us because it changes our desires. A life where we love ourselves leads to a smaller life. But because of Christ's love, we are no longer living for our own comforts or self-centeredness, but rather out of love for him.

**Reflection** 

What does living for yourself look like in your life? Do you feel helpless to bring about this love for God or a change in your life? Spend some time asking God to awaken your love for Him again.

What is God saying to you about your life or church life? What is your response?

*Then we will not turn back from You; revive us,  
and we will call upon Your name. (Ps 80:18)*

The early church, the one that Jesus started, turned their world upside down. They set the world on fire. The church of today may be larger than the early church and has considerable resources, with incredible technology to utilize. Yet it seems as though the world is influencing the church in more ways than we know.

Charles Finney, who was known to be a part of a great revival, said, “The experience of revival is nothing more than a new beginning of obedience to God.” Any genuine revival that has ever happened in human history has brought about repentance in the lives of the people and a change in the community.

We need a revival today—not just an emotional experience, but to see God work in our midst. We may not even need to create something new or a “fresh word from the Lord.” Rather, we need to get back to the old things, to the very standards that God gave us, and we need to practice those. I like what Jeremiah said: “Thus says the Lord: ‘Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls’” (Jeremiah 6:16 NKJV).

**Reflection** 

We talk about the need for revival; the need for change in the church. But we must each ask ourselves these questions: Am I personally revived? Am I living as a committed, on-fire follower of Jesus Christ? If you are not, that is a good place to start.

What is God saying to you about your life or church life? What is your response?

*For the hearts of these people are hardened, and their ears cannot hear, and they have closed their eyes so their eyes cannot see, and their ears cannot hear, and their hearts cannot understand, and they cannot turn to me and let me heal them.’ (Mt 13:15)*

Some people say that the most common problem among Christians today is not sin but being asleep. Why sleep? Because it's too comfortable. People who are in dire straits would not fall asleep. Here are 10 signs you might be too comfortable:

1. You have no expectations for Sunday worship every week
2. You no longer care about the spiritual well-being of your family and church members
3. It's been a long time since you talked about your faith with a non-believer
4. The Bible is a boring book for you
5. The pursuit of happiness is more important to you than a commitment to God.
6. You no longer care about the poor and needy
7. News coverage of international disasters no longer touches your heart
8. You don't feel like offering more even if you have more money
9. You don't feel like praying even if you have time
10. You no longer expect God to make any changes in your life



Reflection 

Which of the above points can I most relate to?

What is God saying to you about your life or church life? What is your response?

*I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. (Rev 2:3-5a)*

When we first came to faith, we were filled with gratitude for everything. However, as life wore on our heart started losing its original zest and liveliness, dependence on the Lord and zeal and desire to draw nearer in our faith. Our love gradually became mere formal ritual. When did we lose our first love? For everyone who has been in the church for a longer period of time, and for people who remain in service, this is an important warning and reminder. The most important danger lies in the person being constantly in contact with matters of God, but ironically as he or she becomes too familiar with the things of God, the person ends up losing the reverence for God. These are some indicators:

- You spend a lot of time studying the Bible, but you are no longer filled with excitement about salvation and the wisdom of the Word
- You spend so much time explaining the theology in the bible but you no longer remember that its ultimate goal is personal sanctification;
- You spend a lot of time explaining the atonement of the cross, but you no longer feel sorrow over your sins and joy over God's salvation;
- You spend a lot of time training others, but you no longer marvel and rejoice that you have been chosen to be a disciple;
- You spend so much time on church ministry strategies and plans that you no longer desire the Lord who guides your way;
- You spend a lot of time thinking about how to better lead worship, but privately you no longer fear God...

When all this becomes so commonplace, we may no longer be moved; and we hardly notice God's amazing grace anymore! Sometimes, the more we see something, the less we actually "see", or perceive it. The beautiful things that attracted you in the past are still there, but you no longer see them and you're no longer grateful for them. There is nothing more dangerous for a person who serves God than losing his fear of God!

**Reflection** 

Are you so familiar with the things of God that you are no longer moved and full of fear of God? Has your heart begun to take the faith for granted, and is your heart already numb? May the Lord to help us find our first love...

What has God prompted you about your personal life or church life? What is your response?

*“So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up - one on one side, one on the other - so that his hands remained steady till sunset. So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.” (Ex 17:10–13)*

This practice of praying on behalf of others is commonly known as intercession. Essentially, intercession is standing in the gap between a loving God on the one hand and a broken situation on the other, seeking God's intervention in that tough place.

In this text, we see Moses interceding for young Joshua, the commander of the Israelite army. While Joshua's role was to fight the good fight, Moses' role was to intercede in prayer. As long as he continued interceding, the forces of darkness were kept at bay and the Israelites pressed on. When Moses grew weary and gave in, the Israelites faded back.

There are many lessons about intercession that we may consider from this account. I've sometimes heard from elderly church members, almost apologetically, that they're unable to contribute to the church in the ways they once did due to health or other reasons; Their main contribution now is “only pray”.

Maybe subconsciously, we have come to think of intercessory prayer as a nice addition to our activity. We must never underestimate the power of intercessory prayer in the Kingdom of God. Does Joshua win the battle against the Amalekites if Moses doesn't intercede for him? Seemingly, the answer is no.

**Reflection** 

Do I consider intercession a useful activity? Or is it perhaps a second tier activity when I cannot 'do' other things? How might my perspective and activity change if I considered intercession as critical? What are the areas that I want to commit to stand in the gap to intercede for church?

What is God saying to you about your life or church life? What is your response?

*For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again (2 Cor 5:14-15)*

The bride and bridegroom were exchanging vows and were pledging eternal love in the presence of God and the Church as their witness. A lady regretfully sighed, "All these vows and promises are good for today. They'll be easily forgotten soon." She rhetorically questioned, "Who honours them anyway?"

Honour originates in our hearts and refers to the value we personally place on something or someone. When we honour God, we reveal the high regard we have for Him. God desires honour that comes from our hearts. "The Lord says, 'These people come near to me with their mouth and honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me'" (Isaiah 29:13). So, how can we honour God?

The Bible shows us many ways to honour and glorify God. We show Him high regard and reflect His character by being sexually pure (1 Corinthians 6:18–20), by living lives devoted to Him (Romans 14:8) and our giving. Giving, my dear brothers and sisters, is not just a matter of routine; it's a reflection of our heart's posture toward our Lord.

**Reflection** 

Consider this: Do you give to God with a whole heart, or do you offer Him what's left over?

What is God saying to you about your life or church life? What is your response?

*Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground." (Lk 22:39-44)*

Do you struggle with unanswered prayer? If you have little expectation that your prayer will be answered, it is not earth shattering when, seemingly, nothing happens.

Jesus understood that the greatest good in the world, was that his Father's will would be done. He is willing to pray: Not my will, not my preference, not my way, but Yours be done. If we are to live as fruitful disciples of Jesus in this life, we must maintain faith in the goodness of the Father's will, trusting that he will indeed work out all things for good in the end.

Pete Greig offers in his book some food for thoughts on unanswered prayer, *God on Mute*:

"I asked for strength that I might achieve; He made me weak that I might obey. I asked for health that I might do greater things; I was given grace that I might do better things. I asked for riches that I might be happy; I was given poverty that I might be wise. I asked for power that I might have the praise of men; I was given weakness that I might feel the need of God. I asked for all things that I might enjoy life; I was given life that I might enjoy all things. I received nothing that I asked for, all that I hoped for. My prayer was answered, I was most blessed."



**Reflection** 

Facing with unanswered prayer(s), ask yourself, “Do I really trust that the Father’s will is good, regardless of how things may seem from my perspective in the moment?” Give thanks for the specific ways that God has answered your prayers but not according to the way you asked.

What is God saying to you about your life or church life? What is your response?

*And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. (Col 1:9-10)*

What does a mature Christian look like? Christ came to save us from our sin. We are saved by grace. But we are also saved for a purpose. This purpose is to grow in our relationship with Christ. We are to grow in learning about and integrating the gospel more and more in our lives.

Christian maturity is not a state. Oftentimes in our culture we can think of maturity in terms of graduation. Instead, it's helpful to think of it like a direction rather than a destination. It is not just about what you know. It is not just about what activities you are involved in. Christian maturity influences our priorities, what you do and how you spend your time matters.

It's about God leading us into a deeper relationship, growing to be more like Him. Ultimately, it's about following after Christ and growing in your love for Jesus. It's about trusting Jesus. God is the one who leads us onward to maturity. His Holy Spirit spurs us to love him more. Christian maturity is a lifelong pursuit.

Reflection 

Are you just a long-time member in church or are you growing in maturity? Are you longing to deepen your relationship with God? In what ways do you hope church life can support you on this journey of spiritual growth?

What is God saying to you about your life or church life? What is your response?

*And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. (Col 1:9-10)*

In both passages, Jesus is with his closest friends and disciples. In Matthew 4, we see Jesus calling Peter and Andrew saying, “Come, follow me.” In Matthew 28, we see Jesus telling his disciples, “Go, make disciples.” It is interesting that both commands, while seemingly diametrically opposed (coming v. going), come from Jesus.

As much as the calls and commands are issued to the earliest disciples, they echo through the millennia to Jesus followers today. In many ways, we must be continually coming to him for nourishment, wisdom, and strength before going into the world to disciple the nations, bearing his presence with us. A Christ-centered prayer is as much about him reorienting our lives and desires as it anything else. So, when we come to him, we can then be sent into the world in the power of his presence, carrying it with us, to live the calling he has placed before us.

**Reflection** 

When have you have felt empowered by Jesus' presence and guidance?  
What impact did this have on your interactions with others?

What is God saying to you about your life or church life? What is your response?

*“Even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.” Gather the people, consecrate the assembly; bring together the elders, gather the children, those nursing at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her chamber. Let the priests, who minister before the Lord, weep between the portico and the altar. Let them say, “Spare your people, Lord. (Joel 2:12, 16-17)*

Often when it comes to repentance, many often think of confession as being an individual act. But when it comes to Scripture, repentance is not only an individual act, it’s also for the church. In Joel chapter 2, the prophet Joel is calling for the people of Judah to come together and repent. The book describes an invasion of locusts who come in and ate up all the food that was to be harvested. This could be referring to a real natural disaster or it could be a metaphor describing an invading army.

In response, Joel is calling people to come together to pray and ask the Lord for mercy. In these verses, there is a repeated word: RETURN. God calls the people to turn back to God and seek him once again. They are called to shift their desires and will back toward God. Their external actions are meant to echo their hearts. Tearing one’s clothes was an expression of sorrow and grief. God didn’t just want a show of sorrow, he wanted real repentance. Elders, children, brides and bridegrooms, priests and ministers are all called to Solomon’s Temple to pray and ask God to spare his people.

Reflection 

Are there areas in our church that we are called to repent? Are we mindful of the other ministries in our church or do we draw clear boundaries? Pray that the Holy Spirit will shine in our hearts on these areas.

What is God saying to you about your life or church life? What is your response?

*“But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.” (1 Cor 12:18-10, NIV)*

We address people in church as our brothers and sisters, like our family members. Just like our biological family members, we did not choose them for ourselves but God chose them for us. Hence, we share an inseparable relationship with them. Because we all belong to Christ, we all belong to the family of Christ.

In the gospel of John, we read this passage (19:26-27), “When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, “Woman, here is your son,” and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.” Because of what Christ proclaimed, Mary and John became each other’s family member, loyalty between a biological mother and son is demonstrated in their relationship.

The church is not like the other communities, where we can choose to participate or not participate according to our comfort levels. Other organisations would not request for us to make personal sacrifices for other members when they are faced with troubles, but there is such a need within a family.

We are a family, a team. Not only do you need the church, the church also needs you! Consider this, if a soccer team has 11 goalkeepers (if every player wants to be a goalkeeper), how ridiculous would it be! The church that God designed has different roles. In other words, the team is incomplete without you and without the team, you will also be lacking.



**Reflection** 

When I think about the role I play in church, do I recognise my unique contribution? Or do I focus more on my shortcomings or areas in which I am lacking in?

What is God saying to you about your life or church life? What is your response?

*Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. (1 Thess 5:16-18)*

We are familiar with 1 Thessalonians 5:18, that we need to learn to 'give thanks in all circumstances'. Certainly the apostle Paul was a great example of this, but when we think about thanksgiving we don't often turn to those situations that we find difficult or painful. And yet that is precisely the place God wants us to get to – not a happy kind of thankful but being able to trust and love and thank Him despite whatever is going on around (and to) us.

Take some time to ask God to reveal to you experiences that are still locked away that you've never thanked Him for precisely because they were difficult. Ask for His revelation about them, so that you can see them through His eyes. Wait, seek His wisdom and then speak out a prayer of thanks, acknowledging the part they have played in shaping you. If there is pain or hurt that needs dealing with sit before your Father and ask Him to pour His healing balm on you, opening yourself up to His love and care.

Likewise, give thanks to God for our church: how he sustains us through the challenges and crisis; give thanks for the different seasons that we went through. Remember the people who are tireless in their efforts to serve in ministries, on missions, and in their own private ways to the needs of others. Each and everyone of these people is a living witness of God's love and faithfulness to us as His children.

**Reflection** 

What is God saying to you about your life or church life? What is your response?

*“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.” (Eph 4:16)*

In my Christian journey, over time I have experienced much spiritual growth, but there is something I continue to struggle with—feeling like a stranger in a place which was meant to provide a sense of belonging. For years, the feeling of loneliness was something that never went away despite being surrounded by people. For reasons unknown to me, it has been difficult to get beyond surface level conversations with my friends at church. As each week passed by, the feeling of discouragement to attend church grew stronger. One day, however, God opened my eyes and led me to Eph 4:16:

The phrase “every supporting ligament” caught my eye. This emphasizes the significance of each member of the church in building up the body of Christ. I realized that — as unimportant as I felt — I am still a member of the body. Looking back, I realized that every instance of struggle is an opportunity for Him to work in us, which paves the way towards spiritual maturity. It is also through these interactions that we learn to love, forgive and build up each other, just as Christ did for us.

**Reflection** 

How do we, as a church, build and grow in love towards one another? How does this relate to each person fulfilling their role?

What is God saying to you about your life or church life? What is your response?

## Week 3 Day 3 Forgiveness

*“Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. “ (Lk 11:4, NIV)*

Even the best of relationships, there will be miscommunication, times when words will be misconstrued, and even actions done out of bitterness, anger or pride. Including the Christian community. At one point or another we will hurt one another.

Pain that comes from the community can be both a result of sin or from God. You too need to ask God for discernment. Pain is not license to sin. When one hurts it is very tempting to lash out. It also does not mean that you should excuse sinful behavior of others. Ask God for wisdom how to speak and address the pain. Draw your comfort from Christ. The answer is not to isolate oneself. Sin calls us into isolation.

When sin is brought into the light we have an opportunity to honestly and humbly face it together as we surrender to the power of forgiveness. The hope for healing does not come when the community or the individual changes. Hope comes through the gospel. We have been made one in Christ. We have been forgiven in Christ and we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to be able to forgive. Let us continue to place our hope not on people, but on God’s work of salvation.

## Week 3 Day 3 Forgiveness

### Reflection

Consider the role of accountability and support from the broader church community in the process of healing relationships. How can the church body come alongside individuals to help?

What is God saying to you about your life or church life? What is your response?

## Week 3 Day 4 Conflict - A Change of Perspective

*I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one — I in them and you in me — so that they may be brought to complete unity. (Jn 17:11, 22-23)*

We should view church conflicts with hope. The unity of God's people in spite of differences is a reflection of the gospel. Christ made us one with himself. Christ in his high priestly prayer for his disciples the night he was to be betrayed prayed that his people would be one (John 17:11, 22). Christ is at work within his church.

Conflict in community can be God's means of sanctification. God has saved us from our sin and is still cleansing and purifying us from our sin. One way of sanctification is through a community. A person does not grow in love or care by isolating oneself. It is actually in disagreement where we learn patience, kindness and grace. But it is not just for the sanctification of them-as if they're the problem. Conflicts can be used as opportunities to examine us. In those moments we can ask ourselves, "What do I really want in arguing over an issue?" We may think we are doing right, but our motives and methods may not be in the right place. It is in these conflicts where these heart desires are exposed.

Often in the heat of conflict we may not see or think that God is involved. We often lose sight and believe that the problem is the other person, the leadership, the other group, or the situation. On one hand this is true. Conflicts can be about organization, relationships, doctrine, personality or process. These need to be dealt with and worked through. But the question is how. These conflicts can also reveal what is in the heart. Next time you're involved in a conflict, a great question may be to ask is, "**God what are you trying to do in me and through me for your glory?**"



## Week 3 Day 4 Conflict - A Change of Perspective

### Reflection

Do I avoid conflict? Or I see conflict as dividing the church? Recall a conflict with a church member/leader/pastor? How would I have handled it differently?

What is God saying to you about your life or church life? What is your response?

## Week 3 Day 5 What God Wants From Us

*And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)*

Micah 6:8 is not just a call to individual righteousness but a blueprint for the well-being of a society. In our contemporary world, where we often grapple with issues of justice, inequality and moral decay, this verse is a poignant reminder of what truly matters.

To be **JUST** is a call to action— not to be silent or complacent when others, especially the most vulnerable, are mistreated, exploited, or left in need. When we see need, pain, and loss, we should respond with **MERCY**, as God has shown us mercy. However, to do justice and love mercy as God does is not within our own power. We **HUMBLY** ask the Lord to help us, empower us, lead us, equip us. It will never be easy, especially on the road to reconciliation but it is the road God calls us to walk.

It challenges us to evaluate our personal and communal lives. Are we upholding justice not just in our actions but in our spheres of influence? Do we practice mercy, showing compassion even when it's hard? And amid our accomplishments and advancements, do we maintain a spirit of humility, recognizing a power greater than ourselves?

In essence, Micah 6:8 is a call to return to the basics; it is an invitation to build societies on the bedrock of justice, enrich them with the compassion of mercy, and steer them with the wisdom of humility.

## Week 3 Day 5 What God Wants From Us

### Reflection

How do you see the principles of justice, mercy, and humility from Micah 6:8 being applied or neglected in our personal life? In church?

What is God saying to you about your life or church life? What is your response?

## Week 3 Day 6 The Call to Evangelism

*“Have no fear of them nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect” (1 Pet. 3:14-15)*

Evangelism is probably one of the most intimidating and challenging practices that Christians are called to engage in. What is interesting about scripture is that you will not find an explicit command to go and share the gospel with people. What you see is a command to go and make disciples (Matt. 28:19-20). Instead of “Go and evangelise”, what you see is the apostles instructing the church to live out the full implications of the gospel.

In his letters, Paul is constantly talking about the gospel, but his correspondences are directed toward the believers in the churches. Paul does proclaim the gospel boldly wherever he goes and instructs the believers to imitate his life (Phil 1:20). And in dealing with non-believers, Peter writes, “Have no fear of them nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect” (1 Pet. 3:14-15). In other words, the glory of Christ being put on display for the world to see in the life of the believers in the way they conducted themselves as individuals and as a community. They were to be prepared to answer those who observed their lives and wondered why they were doing what they were doing. **When the church actually becomes what it is meant to be, it cannot help but bring attention to itself.**

The Church proclaims Christ as Lord in two ways- in word and in action. Some would say that they don't like to talk to others about Jesus but would rather people simply look at their lives. Others simply preach about Jesus without consideration of their belief in action. People are meant to watch your life and see a difference. But it must also be spoken. The gospel must be lived and spoken. May we hear the message of Christ ourselves and be bold to live it out and proclaim to those around us.

## Week 3 Day 6 The Call to Evangelism

### Reflection

To live out and proclaim the gospel -- In what ways is this happening in church? Would you pray for the Holy Spirit to awaken and empower us?

What is God saying to you about your life or church life? What is your response?

## Week 3 Day 7 The Church Isn't Perfect, But I Love Her

*“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (Jn 13:34-35)*

Christians may have a love-hate relationship with a place called church. We receive nourishment from the church and feel loved, but it is inevitable that we also experience hurt and disappointment. Watch out for bitterness that rises from unfulfilled expectations when our focus is not on Christ. Remember, the church is an imperfect institution that is in the process of sanctification. So, do not expect perfection, but expect a willingness to grow.

Perhaps you don't like the current church, or you feel you don't have the ability to change the people in the church. I remember reading this: "God did not call me to change these people, He called me to love them, and the rest is His work." When people from different backgrounds come together because of love, we make up the Lord's family, which is a powerful witness to the world. While we cannot make the church perfect, we can fill this "home" with love. If you want this "home" to be filled with love, then you and I need to be committed and contribute to the "lovely home"!

## Week 3 Day 7 The Church Isn't Perfect, But I Love Her

### Reflection

How do I typically react when I face people or situations that I want to change? How can I shift my focus from wanting to change others to loving and trusting God?

What is God saying to you about your life or church life? What is your response?

## Week 4 Day 1 Building a Community

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. (2 Cor 1:3-4)*

It's hard being in community. Those who have been influenced by and experienced a healthy Christian community may know that it is truly important to be committed to being in a community. But it's hard. But why is it so hard?

**Time** - It takes time to be part of a community. Relationships take time, so community building takes time. But time is a precious commodity. It means time from doing other things that I want. The longer a person is away from the community, the more challenging it is for them to reconnect back with others.

**Presence** - It isn't just time that makes things difficult, it's the fact that physically people need to be there. It's increasingly popular to find sermons and lectures by popular preachers online. People feel less and less inclined to go to Church. Relationships don't form the same way online as they do when you're physically present. But it means leaving the comfort zone of a house and the conveniences of life.

**Vulnerability** - The truth of the matter is that all of us are willing to pay the cost of time and presence for certain things. The hard part about community is learning to be vulnerable. People often see vulnerability – letting your authentic self and your raw emotions be seen – as weakness. Showing you've got everything together, on the other hand, is somehow equated to strength. And regardless of whether you're an extrovert or introvert, vulnerability is difficult. It takes a huge amount of courage to be vulnerable because it to basically be open to judgement, rejection and to others potentially hurting you.



## Week 4 Day 1 Building a Community

### Reflection

Which of the above is most challenging for you? Would you be willing to give it a try to build an attractive community together?

What is God saying to you about your life or church life? What is your response?

## Week 4 Day 2 Church and Discipleship

*Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you, and behold, I am with you all the days until the end of the age.” (Mt 28: 19-20)*

Most of us are familiar with Mathew 28, what is commonly known as the Great Commission. But what has gone wrong in the church, that “discipleship” seems to have become a slogan on the pulpit rather than the life of the church itself?

When we look at church life: during a Sunday service, worship orients our hearts; proclamation of God’s Word convicts us when we are wrong, heals us when we are wounded, and encourages us when we lose sight of God’s love. Praying together reminds us that we are all struggling, and we need each other to help us along in our walk with Christ. Sunday school anchors us on the word of God.

But at the end of the day, RELATIONSHIP is the key word. Discipleship for the Lord Jesus was not a course to be taught to his followers, but a lifestyle he invited them in, an intimate relationship he developed with them to impact their lives for eternity. Mark 3: 14 -15 says “and he appointed twelve, so that they would be with him and so that he could send them out to preach and to have authority to expel demons.”

From Christ’s model of discipleship, relationship comes before ministry. We make disciples through our personal relationship with them rather than through sermons we preach and seminars we hold in churches. As a pastor, the few church members I spend a lot of time with sharing lives and serving together for ministry, they tend to become more mature and effective Christians than those who simply attend to church services. I do not disqualify discipleship classes and programmes, they have their own places in the church but building relationship with people, spending time privately with them seems to yield more results than discipleship programmes.

## Week 4 Day 2 Church and Discipleship

### Reflection

Reflect on Jesus' interactions with His disciples. In what ways did He prioritize building relationships with them before commissioning them for ministry?

What is God saying to you about your life or church life? What is your response?

## **Week 4 Day 3** A Community That is Accountable to One Another

*Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near. (Heb 10:24-25)*

Generally, when we think of accountability we think only of the negative. The point behind accountability isn't just to share about sin and hear the hard words of rebuke. Ultimately accountability can be a means in which God draws us, through the friendship and fellowship of others, to himself. Self-sufficiency says we don't need anyone, but humility shouts for help from those God has placed in our lives. This habit of sharing and praying with others will inevitably teach us how to cast our cares on the only One who can fully bear their weight and who loves us with an unfailing love.

We always live better when we are surrounded by a community that loves us and walks with us down the path of wisdom. Not every friend will know (or should know) everything about you. But there are people that God has placed in our lives who will love us enough to understand our hearts, bear our burdens, warn us of the dangers of our sin, and walk with us toward Christ.

Building this type of personal community can be a challenge. Jesus Himself gave us an example of vulnerability. On the night before He was crucified, He openly shared with His close disciples, Peter, James, and John, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death" (Mark 14:34). He even tells them how to partner with Him: "Watch and pray." Yet they fell asleep. Sharing your life is not primarily about safety and receiving the proper response. People might fail to love you as you hoped but don't give up or look for a new community. Give them honest feedback and trust that God will use that moment to deepen the love in your relationship.

May our church be filled with deeper friendships that know one another personally and hold one another accountable to faithfully run together toward Christ.

## Week 4 Day 3 A Community That is Accountable to One Another

### Reflection

Do I struggle with being vulnerable? How can I actively seek out and cultivate healthy accountability relationships?

What is God saying to you about your life or church life? What is your response?

## Week 4 Day 4 The Strength To Serve

*Mark 10:45: "For the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many." ; I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service (1 Tim 1:12)*

How can we possibly serve God with a right motive and joyfully? There are times when serving God is exhausting. One only read a few chapters of the Bible to see the examples of how difficult it is to serve God. Moses had to lead a rebellious and obstinate people forty years through desert wilderness. David was wrongly pursued and hunted while only being loyal to a rebellious king. Jeremiah is tasked to preach to the people of God. All he gets for his troubles is rejection and threats. Simply put: serving God is not easy.

How are we to encourage people to continue to serve and live for Jesus? I can see the recruiting process for ministry now. "Come serve God- you'll feel alone, helpless, and abandoned. But don't worry; when you feel this way, you'll have people whom you're serving make you feel that you really are alone. Anyone interested?"

In light of all these difficulties, why would anyone in their right mind want to continue serving God? We can appeal to duty, to guilt, or to shame. But I think what keeps us on is this: For the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many." Jesus who showed the example, empowers His servants to continue his work. We don't serve God with our strength, but with the strength that God provides.

Turning to Jesus is not just for when we first accept Christ. Turning to Jesus is a continual process of taking steps of faith. For us, when we serve, we are called to continue to turn to Jesus- the founder and perfecter of our faith. Serving people reveals the areas in our lives that God needs to transform. Give thanks that God is fulfilling his will in our lives and in our service. May God strengthen us with a deep understanding of his inexhaustible strength as you continue to serve Him.

## Week 4 Day 4 The Strength To Serve

### Reflection

In what ways have you encountered God while serving Him? Do I seek to serve people when I come to church or seeking to be served?

What is God saying to you about your life or church life? What is your response?

## Week 4 Day 5 Perseverance in Prayer

*Then he said, “Don’t be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day you began to pray for understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your request has been heard in heaven. I have come in answer to your prayer. But for twenty-one days the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia blocked my way. Then Michael, one of the archangels, came to help me, and I left him there with the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia. Now I am here to explain what will happen to your people in the future, for this vision concerns a time yet to come. (Daniel 10:12–14)*

Daniel, we are told, is a faithful Jew living in exile in Babylon. Daniel is given a vision of a terrible war that will take place and, we are told, he begins a period of mourning and fasting for about three weeks. In our text today, we hear that Daniel’s prayer was immediately heard and responded to, but the adversaries resisted for three weeks. Eventually, there is spiritual breakthrough.

So, what exactly is happening? Daniel is in the midst of an intense spiritual struggle. His prayer was heard and God responded. But, it took some time for the break through to actually be realized. In fact, it took three weeks. This is a reminder for us that spiritual break throughs often take time. The bigger the breakthrough, the longer it may take, though not necessarily so.

Someone used an analogy of building a wall to describe pressing on in prayer. What’s the difference between a two-foot fence, the wall of house, and the wall of a cathedral? The answer – a whole lot of bricks! Prayer is often like stacking bricks. We may have to stack only enough bricks to build a small wall or, if we are praying for a really massive thing (consider the abolition of slavery in the 19th century), it may take a cathedral sized wall. We must be willing, as a people, to pray and keep on praying, never giving up and never ceasing until the breakthrough comes. This may mean three hours, three weeks or three years of prayer, but press on, and continue stacking the bricks awaiting God’s faithful response.



## Week 4 Day 5 Perseverance in Prayer

### Reflection

Consider the role of community in persevering in prayer. How can praying with others or sharing prayer requests help you to persevere?

What is God saying to you about your life or church life? What is your response?

## Week 4 Day 6 Committed, Not Casual Indifference

*All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer. (Acts 2:42)*

I often hear from Christians that they do not have to go to church to worship God; this is a fallacy and a lie from our enemy. If we are not committed to a church home, then there is no one to keep us accountable or to miss us when we do not attend worship. When we neglect church, our spiritual disciplines will fall, one-by-one. Prayer will fall to the side. Perhaps, if we have time, we may pray. It will be the same with the reading of Scripture, and so forth. The growth we experienced in Christ will lose the stability.

We need to be committed to the church because we need one another. Being committed to the church is more than a gold star for attendance; it is a commitment to the work of our Lord. It requires submission to His authority, and active participation and giving of ourselves.

## Week 4 Day 6 Committed, Not Casual Indifference

### Reflection

Do you envision our church to be one where more and more people are committed instead of a casual difference? Would you commit this in prayer to God.

What is God saying to you about your life or church life? What is your response?

## **Week 4 Day 7** **Vision 2: Radical Generosity, Not Self-Centered Living**

*And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. (Acts 2:44-45)*

The Christians in that first church were captured by a dynamic and personal vision of God, but that did not keep them from focusing on one another. Christianity did not isolate believers to focus exclusively on their own relationship with Jesus, but made each believer another vital part in the body of Christ — each of them carrying what others need from God to the one in need.

God promises to meet our every need (Matthew 6:25–33), and many times (if not most often) he meets our needs through another believer. He gifts each of us, not for self-expression or self-fulfilment, but to fill what is lacking in someone else by meeting genuine needs. God has given each of us grace that was not meant to end with us, but to extend to someone else (1 Peter 4:10). But without selfless and sacrificial compassion, grace ends up in storage, not in action.

## Week 4 Day 7 Vision 2: Radical Generosity, Not Self-Centered Living

### Reflection

Is your community radically selfless and generous toward one another?

What is God saying to you about your life or church life? What is your response?

## Week 5 Day 1 Contagious Joy, Not Segregated Cliques

*They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity — all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved. (Acts 2:46-47)*

When I think about my church and my small group, though, the sentence that haunts and inspires me most is the last one in this paragraph: “And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47). All the devotion and affection and compassion became irresistibly contagious.

We do not measure our community strictly in numbers, because only God gives the growth, not us (1 Corinthians 3:7). But we should measure ourselves in part by whether he's giving the growth at all. If our Christian community is committed, but not compelling to anyone, we should be asking serious questions about what we're committed to.

Every single church in the world has a mission statement direct from our Lord himself: “Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19–20). God didn't mean for some of us to make disciples and others to do other kinds of ministry. Every Christian and every Christian community is called to win the lost and build into Christian maturity. God intends to make every genuine expression of true love, joy, and worship contagious.

## Week 5 Day 1 Contagious Joy, Not Segregated Cliques

### Reflection

Is your community consistently making disciples?

What is God saying to you about your life or church life? What is your response?

## Week 5 Day 2    **Joining God At Work**

*Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.” ..  
Jesus gave them this answer: “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed.” (Jn. 5:19-20)*

Some Christians see the process of seeking God's will as abstract; others face challenges in grasping God's plan for their lives or discerning the direction for the church. One way is to pay attention to what God is doing in our midst. God is and always has been actively drawing people to Himself. God is always at work. The thing it helps me to remember is that God's focus has always been on getting His people to come into line with His will and with what is on His heart, so that we can adjust our lives to Him, rather than having God design His plans around us.

This means that I do not have to come up with plans for God, but to discern how he is working and join Him in His work, I am then in perfect alignment. For some, it means to be more mindful of what is actually going on around them, how other people may be hurting, who needs attention or help. FOR YOU, what does it mean?



## Week 5 Day 2    Joining God At Work

### Reflection

Are we doing the work He has planned for our lives or are we serving Him in the way and manner that feels most comfortable to us? Where do you see God at work around you? How does He want you to join Him?

What is God saying to you about your life or church life? What is your response?

## Recalling This Journey

- 1) Invite the Holy Spirit to illuminate the insights and messages in your journal as you review them:
    - a) Make a note of the key words or phrases that resonate with you.
  
    - b) Are there any recurring themes or messages throughout your journal entries? Pay attention to any patterns or connections.
  
  - 2) What are the areas relating to your relationship with God where God might be calling you to grow or change. In what ways?
- ✂ -----
- 3) What are the areas relating to our church life where God might be calling us to focus for the next few years? In what ways?

This is the link for the response or scan the QR code.

<https://tinyurl.com/5n723z4n>





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