

*Ready For More*

DEVOTIONAL





THIS JOURNEY BELONGS TO

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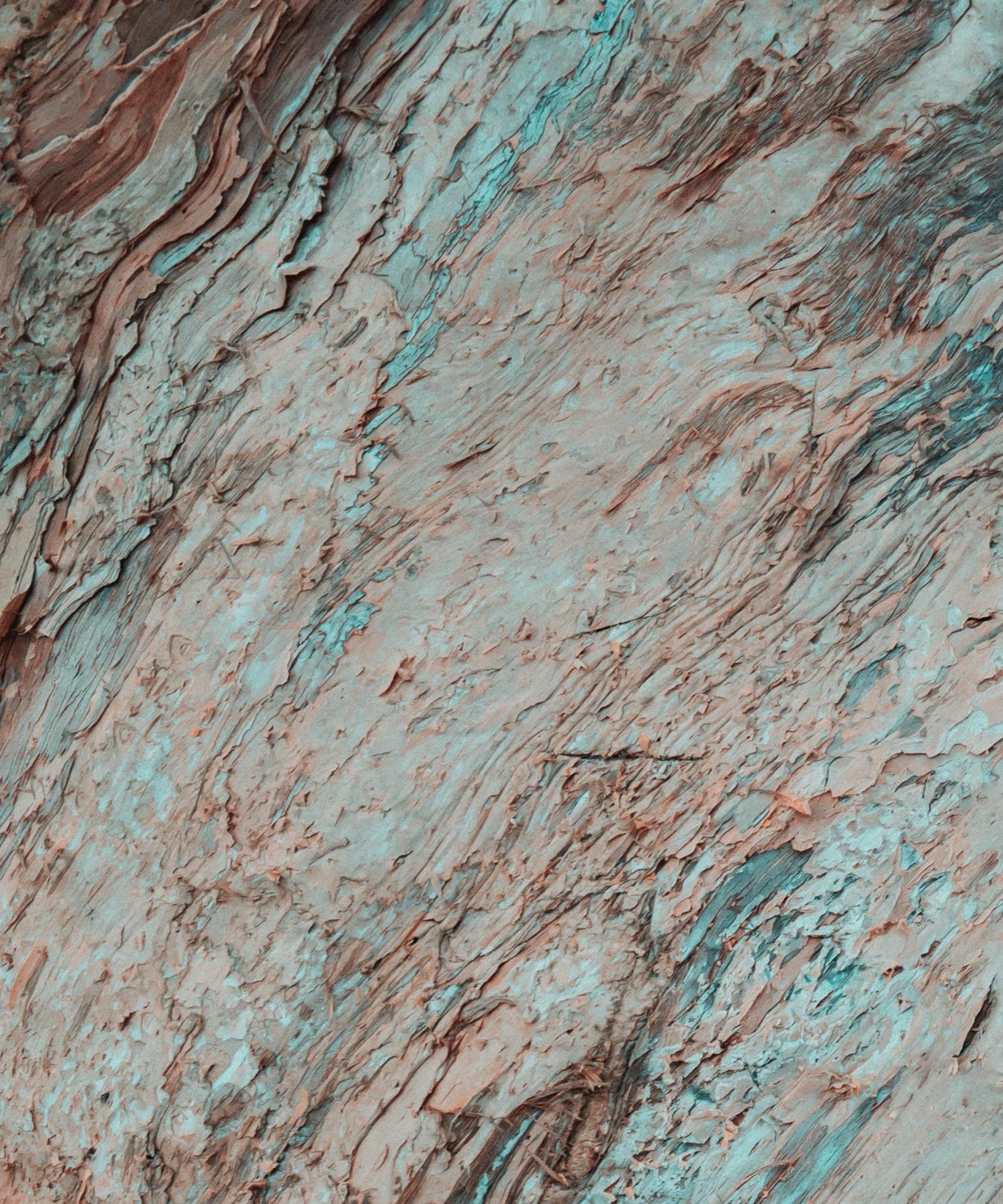
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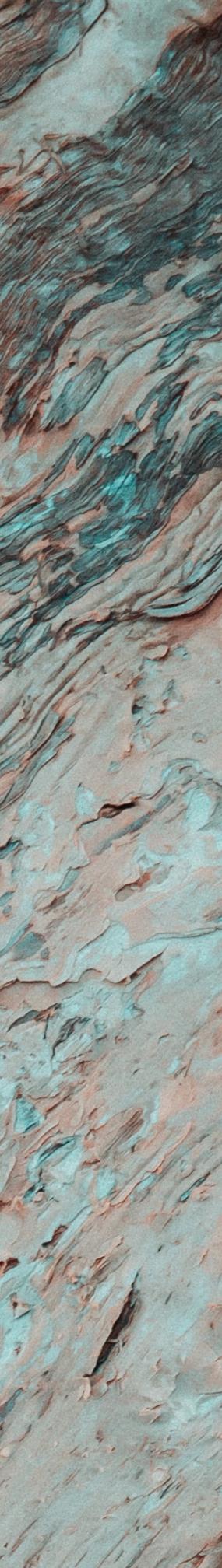
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*Scripture references from New International Version.*

*Ready For More*  
DEVOTIONAL







A MESSAGE FROM

# JARRETT + JEANNE

Welcome to the Ready for More Devotional

Our hope and prayer is that through this devotional, you will have an opportunity to enter into meaningful and transformational moments with God. Once again, God has called us into something well beyond what is possible through our own strength, and we can't wait to hear all of the Only God stories that will come out of this season.

This journal is designed to help you reflect on how God is inviting you to deepen your dependence, stretch and strengthen your faith, and open your heart to be ready for more of God in every area of your life.

Acts 2:42–47 gives us a picture of how the early church was truly ready for more and how the church became an unstoppable force for God's love to be shared:

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

That first church was ready for more and what we are embarking on in this season at Soul City can be traced back to that very church. It's why we have an unrelenting hope and unwavering belief that there is nothing like a local church when it is built on the transforming love of JESUS.

Since our early days as a church, we have ended every gathering with this simple benediction: "May God wreck your life with His amazing love and grace." God has answered that prayer over and over again. As we begin this new adventure to launch two new SOUL CITY CHURCHES, build a physical HOUSE OF HOPE at our West Loop Church, and create the SOUL CITY STUDIO for recording and broadcasting, we believe that benediction is going to be our rally cry. We believe God is inviting us to be **READY FOR MORE**. We believe God is calling us into something more astonishing and audacious than ever before. Something that we believe will wreck our faith all over again and will cause us to look back and declare that we have never seen anything like this (Mark 2:12).

We believe God is calling us to more of Him so that we can experience and extend more of His love, His grace, and His transforming power. So, the question is ... are you **READY FOR MORE?**

Grace & Peace,  
JARRETT & JEANNE STEVENS  
*Soul City Church Lead Pastors*

# TABLE OF CONTENT

## EXTRA CONTENT

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The Heart Behind <i>More</i>	10	Fire by Soul City Worship	31
Israelite Perseverance Timeline	38	Map of First Century Palestine	68
Ready by Soul City Worship	73	Contributors	87

Jarrett + Jeanne 06

**DAY 1**  
Ready For More **Glory** 11

**DAY 2**  
Ready For More **Purpose** 23

**DAY 3**  
Ready For More **Perseverance** 35

**DAY 4**  
Ready For More **Faith** 45

**DAY 5**  
Ready For More **Room** 55

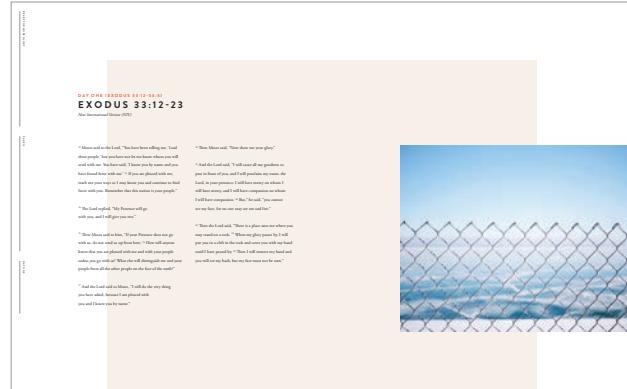
**DAY 6**  
Ready For More **Love** 65

**DAY 7**  
Ready For **More** 77

# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

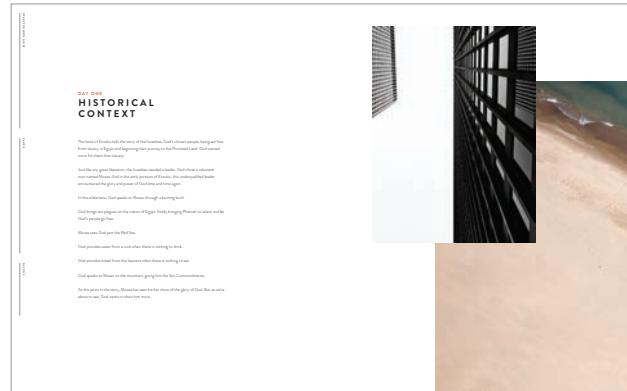
## SCRIPTURE

The Scriptures are the root of this book. We hold it higher than anything written in these pages and pray that God speaks to you through the Holy Spirit in meaningful and powerful ways.



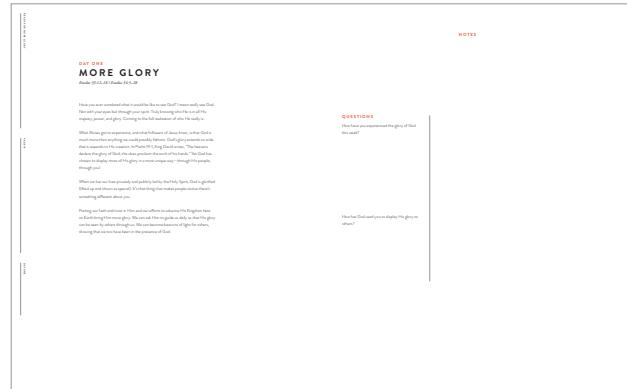
## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Each day starts with a background to understand the biblical passage in its proper context. Specifically how each passage fits into the Bible's story of God's invitation to more.



## DEVOTIONALS

These pages unpack the daily Scripture readings from the viewpoint of volunteers and leaders at Soul City Church. Flip to the back to read more about each writer.



## QUESTIONS

Each day we provide space for personal reflection.

## PRAYER

Each day ends with a guided prayer. Be present with God as you engage in the lessons learned from the devotional each day.



# THE HEART BEHIND MORE

Some of us hear the phrase Ready for More and wonder if it is really ok to keep pushing for more. As followers of Jesus, we are called to an inner place of contentment. The apostle Paul knew how to be content in all circumstances, writing these words:

*I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:12, 13)*

So this begs the question, if we are called to be content, is it ok to ask for more? Through life experiences, we learn there is a difference between contentment and complacency. An apathetic attitude that settles for the way things are is not consistent with Scripture. While we rest in the promise that we can find joy no matter what, we are also invited to tell our heavenly Father the desires of our heart. We can ask for more, trusting that God will guide us to receive more abundance for His divine purposes.

The very same apostle Paul also wrote this call to action:  
*...I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:12-14)*

Not only is it ok to ask Him for more, it is one of God's greatest joys to see us flourish in His boundless love and glory. Let us live in expectation that God wants more—more of His people and more for His people.

We enthusiastically invite you to join us in pressing forward to all that God has for us—be ready for more faith, love, purpose, and perseverance. We serve a God who is “able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine” (Ephesians 3:20).  
Are you ready for more?

DAY ONE (EXODUS 33:12–34:28)

## EXODUS 33:12–18

*New International Version (NIV)*

<sup>12</sup> Moses said to the Lord, “You have been telling me, ‘Lead these people,’ but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, ‘I know you by name and you have found favor with me.’” <sup>13</sup> If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people.”

<sup>14</sup> The Lord replied, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”

<sup>15</sup> Then Moses said to him, “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here.” <sup>16</sup> How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?”

<sup>17</sup> And the Lord said to Moses, “I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name.”

<sup>18</sup> Then Moses said, “Now show me your glory.”



## EXODUS 34:5–28

*New International Version (NIV)*

<sup>5</sup> Then the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the Lord. <sup>6</sup> And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, <sup>7</sup> maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.”

<sup>8</sup> Moses bowed to the ground at once and worshiped.

<sup>9</sup> “Lord,” he said, “if I have found favor in your eyes, then let the Lord go with us. Although this is a stiff-necked people, forgive our wickedness

and our sin, and take us as your inheritance.”

<sup>10</sup> Then the Lord said: “I am making a covenant with you. Before all your people I will do wonders never before done in any nation in all the world. The people you live among will see how awesome is the work that I, the Lord, will do for you. <sup>11</sup> Obey what I command you today. I will drive out before you the Amorites, Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. <sup>12</sup> Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land where you are going, or they will be a snare among you. <sup>13</sup> Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and cut down their Asherah poles. <sup>14</sup> Do not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.

<sup>15</sup> “Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land; for when they prostitute themselves to their gods and sacrifice to them, they will invite you and you will eat their sacrifices. <sup>16</sup> And when you choose some of their daughters as wives for your sons and those daughters prostitute themselves to their gods, they will lead your sons to do the same.

<sup>17</sup> “Do not make any idols.

<sup>18</sup> “Celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread. For seven days eat bread made without yeast, as I commanded you. Do this at the appointed time in the month of Aviv, for in that month you came out of Egypt.

<sup>19</sup> “The first offspring of every womb belongs to me, including all the firstborn males of your livestock, whether from herd or flock.<sup>20</sup> Redeem the firstborn donkey with a lamb, but if you do not redeem it, break its neck. Redeem all your firstborn sons.

“No one is to appear before me empty-handed.

<sup>21</sup> “Six days you shall labor, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during the plowing season and harvest you must rest.

<sup>22</sup> “Celebrate the Festival of Weeks with the firstfruits of the wheat harvest, and the Festival of Ingathering at the turn of the year.<sup>23</sup> Three times a year all your men are to appear before the Sovereign Lord, the God of Israel.<sup>24</sup> I will drive out nations before you and enlarge your territory, and no one will covet your land when you go up three times each year to appear before the Lord your God.

<sup>25</sup> “Do not offer the blood of a sacrifice to me along with anything containing yeast, and do not let any of the sacrifice from the Passover Festival remain until morning.

<sup>26</sup> “Bring the best of the firstfruits of your soil to the house of the Lord your God.

“Do not cook a young goat in its mother’s milk.”

<sup>27</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, “Write down these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.”<sup>28</sup> Moses was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant—the Ten Commandments.

DAY ONE

# HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The book of Exodus tells the story of the Israelites, God's chosen people, being set free from slavery in Egypt and beginning their journey to the Promised Land.

Just like any great liberation, the Israelites needed a leader. God chose a reluctant man named Moses. In the early chapters of Exodus, this underqualified leader encountered the glory and power of God time and time again.

In the wilderness, God speaks to Moses through a burning bush.

God brings ten plagues on the nation of Egypt, finally bringing Pharaoh to relent and let God's people go free.

Moses sees God part the Red Sea.

God provides water from a rock when there is nothing to drink.

God provides bread from the heavens when there is nothing to eat.

God speaks to Moses on the mountain, giving him the Ten Commandments.

At this point in the story, Moses has had many experiences of the glory of God. But as we're about to see, God wants to show him more.



## DAY ONE

**MORE GLORY***Exodus 33:12–18 / Exodus 34:5–28*

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to see God? I mean really see God. Not with your eyes but through your spirit. Truly knowing who He is in all His majesty, power, and glory. Coming to the full realization of who He really is.

What Moses got to experience, and what followers of Jesus know, is that God is much more than anything we could possibly fathom. God's glory extends so wide that it expands to His creation. In Psalm 19:1, King David writes, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands." Yet God has chosen to display more of His glory in a most unique way—through His people; through you!

When we live our lives privately and publicly led by the Holy Spirit, God is glorified (lifted up and shown as special). It's that thing that makes people notice there's something different about you.

Putting our faith and trust in Him and our efforts to advance His kingdom here on Earth bring Him more glory. We can ask Him to guide us daily so that His glory can be seen by others through us. We can become beacons of light for others, showing that we too have been in the presence of God.

## NOTES

### QUESTIONS

How have you experienced the glory of God this week?

How has God used you to display His glory to others?









## DAY TWO

## EXODUS 31

*New International Version (NIV)*

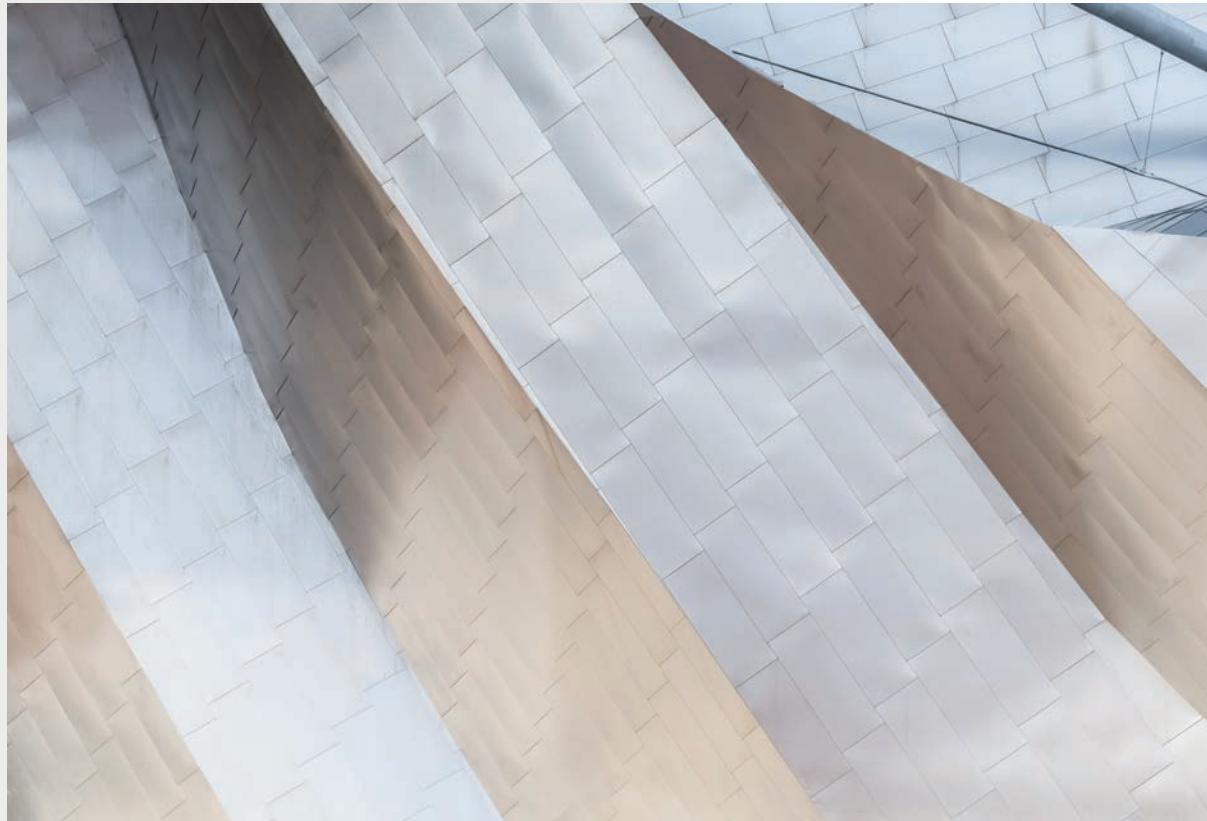
<sup>31</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, <sup>2</sup> “See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, <sup>3</sup> and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills— <sup>4</sup> to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, <sup>5</sup> to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of crafts. <sup>6</sup> Moreover, I have appointed Oholiab son of Ahisamak, of the tribe of Dan, to help him. Also I have given ability to all the skilled workers to make everything I have commanded you: <sup>7</sup> the tent of meeting, the ark of the covenant law with the atonement cover on it, and all the other furnishings of the tent— <sup>8</sup> the table and its articles, the pure gold lampstand and all its accessories, the altar of incense, <sup>9</sup> the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, the basin with its stand— <sup>10</sup> and also the woven garments, both the sacred garments for Aaron the priest and the garments for his sons when they serve as priests, <sup>11</sup> and the anointing oil and fragrant incense for the Holy Place.

They are to make them just as I commanded you.”

<sup>12</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, <sup>13</sup> “Say to the Israelites, ‘You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the Lord, who makes you holy.

<sup>14</sup> “Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you. Anyone who desecrates it is to be put to death; those who do any work on that day must be cut off from their people. <sup>15</sup> For six days work is to be done, but the seventh day is a day of sabbath rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day is to be put to death. <sup>16</sup> The Israelites are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant. <sup>17</sup> It will be a sign between me and the Israelites forever, for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.”

<sup>18</sup> When the Lord finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the covenant law, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God.



## DAY TWO

# HISTORICAL CONTEXT

From the opening pages of the Bible, God expresses a clear desire for His work in the world to be done in partnership with His people. God desires that our lives be defined by more. We are to live out our purpose through His power working within us.

This is why God told man and woman, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground” (Genesis 1:28).

This is why God makes a covenant promise to Abraham that through him, God will birth an entire nation of people who will showcase God’s goodness and be a blessing to the entire world (Genesis 12).

This is why God chose an orphan named Moses to lead the liberation of his people from slavery (Exodus 3).

And this is why when God decides to build a dwelling place for Himself called The Tent of Meeting among His people, God partnered with human beings to design, build, and furnish it. Let’s read about two of those individuals.



## DAY TWO

# MORE PURPOSE

*Exodus 31*

Bezalel is the first person described in the Bible as being filled with the Holy Spirit. God chose a craftsman, not a king or a mighty warrior, to fill “with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship” (Exodus 31:3–6, KJV). What a great reminder that God has instilled purpose in each of us to call out in His time and His way.

In the Old Testament, we read about the Holy Spirit coming upon specific people for particular tasks (such as Bezalel). However, in the Book of Acts (New Testament), we read of a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit for all people. God’s grace poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit is His presence giving us power to fulfill His purpose through us. God has a wonderful purpose for your life, and His powerful presence will equip you for the tasks He called you to do.

God has a plan and a purpose for your life that can only be fully achieved by an outpouring of His Holy Spirit to equip you for the task. Be assured that “God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19, KJV).

## NOTES

### QUESTIONS

Do you feel unqualified for what God is calling you to do? If so, are you open to receiving a fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit to equip you to do “immeasurably more than you have asked or imagined”?

Have you discounted working with someone you consider to be either far superior or inferior to you?

Do you trust that God is in control of time and can complete His purposes in your life?





THE FIRE  
by Soul City Worship

*Fear ain't got no hold on me  
Cause I know who holds the keys  
The doors been opened, I am free  
Fear ain't got no hold on me*

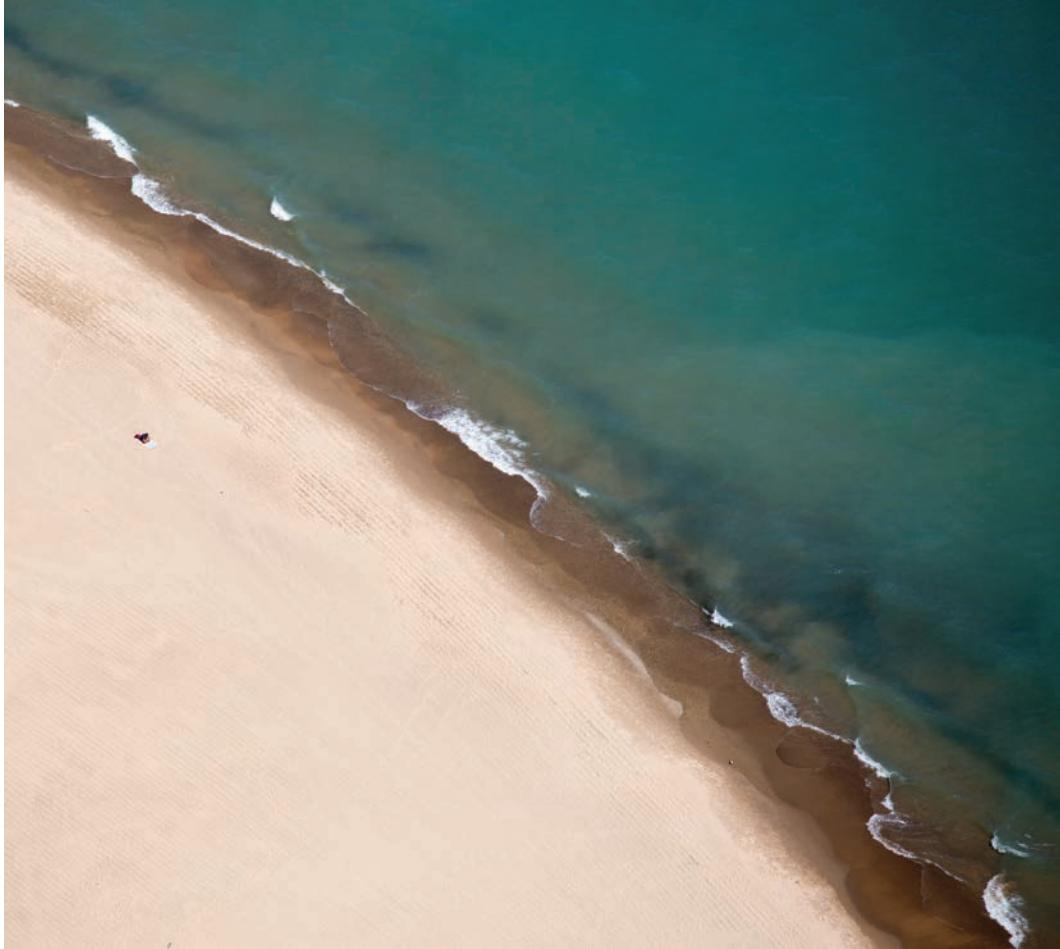
*His light is casting out shadows  
See darkness run for the hills  
His truth will be my sight, bright as the morning  
My God is the fire, He's the fire through the night*

*No the night can't slow me down  
Cause I know who wears the crown  
His holy flame lights up the ground  
So no the night can't hold me down*

*He's stable when everything else has failed me  
He's able when my strength is gone  
He set a table when the enemy came surrounding  
So faithful, my Savior, Christ the Cornerstone*







## DAY THREE

## JOSHUA 6

*New International Version (NIV)*

Now the gates of Jericho were securely barred because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in.

<sup>2</sup> Then the Lord said to Joshua, “See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. <sup>3</sup> March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. <sup>4</sup> Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams’ horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. <sup>5</sup> When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have the whole army give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the army will go up, everyone straight in.”

<sup>6</sup> So Joshua son of Nun called the priests and said to them, “Take up the ark of the covenant of the Lord and have seven priests carry trumpets in front of it.” <sup>7</sup> And he ordered the army, “Advance! March around the city, with an armed guard going ahead of the ark of the Lord.”

<sup>8</sup> When Joshua had spoken to the people, the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets before the Lord went forward, blowing their trumpets, and the ark of the Lord’s covenant followed them. <sup>9</sup> The armed

guard marched ahead of the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard followed the ark. All this time the trumpets were sounding. <sup>10</sup> But Joshua had commanded the army, “Do not give a war cry, do not raise your voices, do not say a word until the day I tell you to shout. Then shout!” <sup>11</sup> So he had the ark of the Lord carried around the city, circling it once. Then the army returned to camp and spent the night there.

<sup>12</sup> Joshua got up early the next morning and the priests took up the ark of the Lord. <sup>13</sup> The seven priests carrying the seven trumpets went forward, marching before the ark of the Lord and blowing the trumpets. The armed men went ahead of them and the rear guard followed the ark of the Lord, while the trumpets kept sounding. <sup>14</sup> So on the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. They did this for six days.

<sup>15</sup> On the seventh day, they got up at daybreak and marched around the city seven times in the same manner, except that on that day they circled the city seven times.

<sup>16</sup> The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the army, “Shout! For the Lord has given you the city! <sup>17</sup> The city and

all that is in it are to be devoted[a] to the Lord. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall be spared, because she hid the spies we sent.

<sup>18</sup> But keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it. <sup>19</sup> All the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron are sacred to the Lord and must go into his treasury.”

<sup>20</sup> When the trumpets sounded, the army shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the men gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so everyone charged straight in, and they took the city. <sup>21</sup> They devoted the city to the Lord and destroyed with the sword every living thing in it—men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep and donkeys.

<sup>22</sup> Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, “Go into the prostitute’s house and bring her out and all who belong to her, in accordance with your oath to her.” <sup>23</sup> So the young men who had done the spying went in and brought out Rahab, her father and mother, her brothers and sisters and all who

belonged to her. They brought out her entire family and put them in a place outside the camp of Israel.

<sup>24</sup> Then they burned the whole city and everything in it, but they put the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron into the treasury of the Lord’s house. <sup>25</sup> But Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent as spies to Jericho—and she lives among the Israelites to this day.

<sup>26</sup> At that time Joshua pronounced this solemn oath: “Cursed before the Lord is the one who undertakes to rebuild this city, Jericho: “At the cost of his firstborn son  
he will lay its foundations;  
at the cost of his youngest  
he will set up its gates.”

<sup>27</sup> So the Lord was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout the land.

## DAY THREE

**HISTORICAL  
CONTEXT**

The story of Joshua and the battle at Jericho is an exemplary illustration for overcoming incredible obstacles. But it's important for us to remember, this was not the first obstacle that God's people had faced on their journey to the Promised Land (see timeline).

The children of Israel (more likely their parents and grandparents) had run for their lives to escape the tyranny of Pharaoh (Exodus 13–14).

They wandered in the desert for 40 years where they'd seen an entire generation live and die (Numbers 32:13).

They'd undergone a complete reorientation of their lives as they sought to be faithful to God's laws (Leviticus).

They'd very recently lost Moses, their leader who led them faithfully from the beginning (Deuteronomy 34).

In Joshua chapters 3 and 4, they finally crossed over the Jordan River, putting them on the brink of the Promised Land they had been dreaming of for decades.

God helped them persevere through famine, disease, natural disaster, war, and death.

Then they arrived at Jericho, and God asks for more.

1446 B.C.

Escape from Egypt  
*Exodus 13-14*

Wandering the desert  
*Numbers 32-13*

1446-1406 B.C.

1445 B.C.

Faithful to the Law  
*Leviticus*

1406 B.C.

Moses died  
*Deuteronomy 34*

1405 B.C.

The Promised Land  
*Joshua 3-4*

## DAY THREE

## MORE PERSEVERANCE

*Joshua 6*

We all face obstacles that are difficult for us to overcome. It can be frustrating when we feel that what we most need or desire is on the other side of an obstacle. God never promised us a life without opposition, but He did equip us with resources to help us push forward; and He promised to never leave us.

Joshua and his people approached the city of Jericho to reclaim the land that belonged to them. After praying to God for guidance, the Lord told Joshua to direct his people to march around the city with instruments of praise for seven days (yes, seven days). On the last day of marching, God told them to shout in victory—which led to the walls of the enemy’s camp crashing down. Through their obedience to God and perseverance in this hardship, they experienced victory.

It is important to have the perseverance mindset—the ability to press forward through opposition—when situations in life become challenging. When the going gets tough, act as the Lord instructed Joshua:

March forward with confidence that you have an all-powerful Father who will always go before you in all situations. Even if you have to continue to press longer than expected (remember, the Israelites had to march for seven days), know that God’s plan for you is bulletproof.

Have the sound of faith-filled praise in your words, actions, and thoughts. Thank God for the promise and plan that He has already laid out for you. The plan to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11).

Shout the victory! Be confident that God will complete the work He began in you, and this obstacle you are facing is not the end.

Continue to rest assured that the God we call our Father is with us through every circumstance we face. It is important that we persevere—in thought and in action—through every obstacle that comes our way. God is always there for us, so march forward with praise and confidence. Those walls that seem to block your way are already starting to fall!

## NOTES

### QUESTIONS

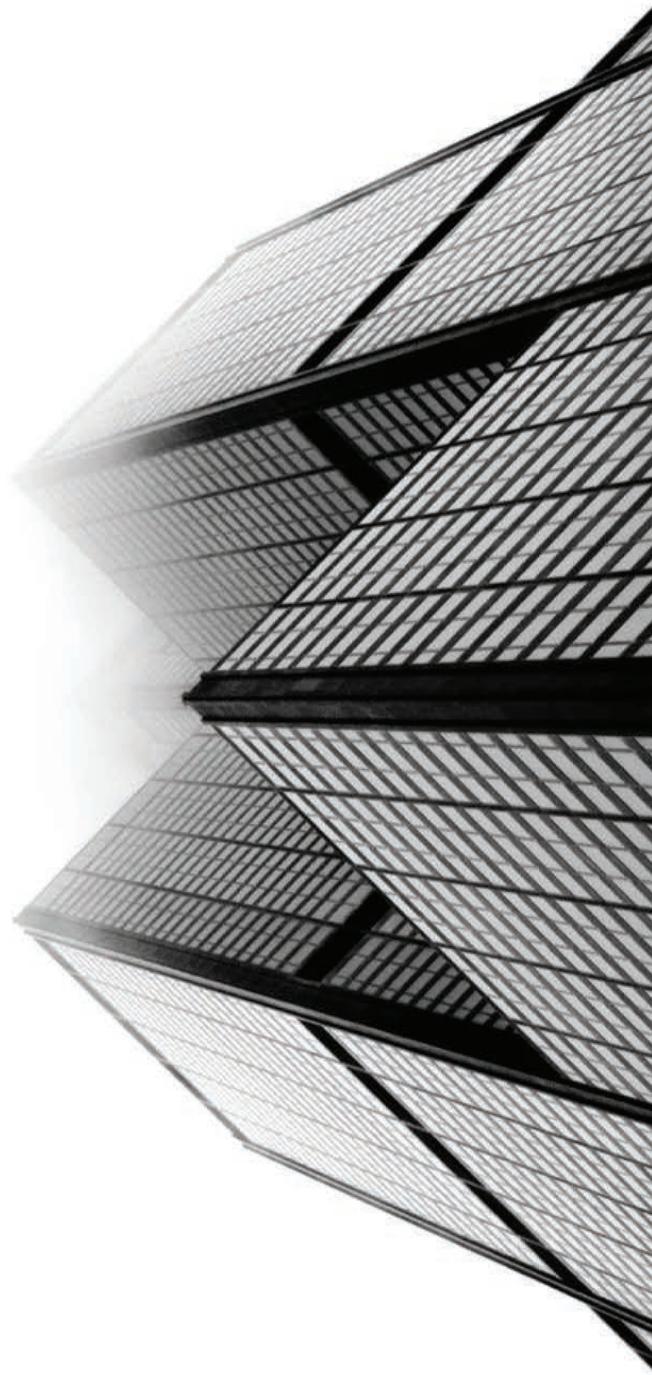
What are some examples of how you have overcome an obstacle through perseverance?

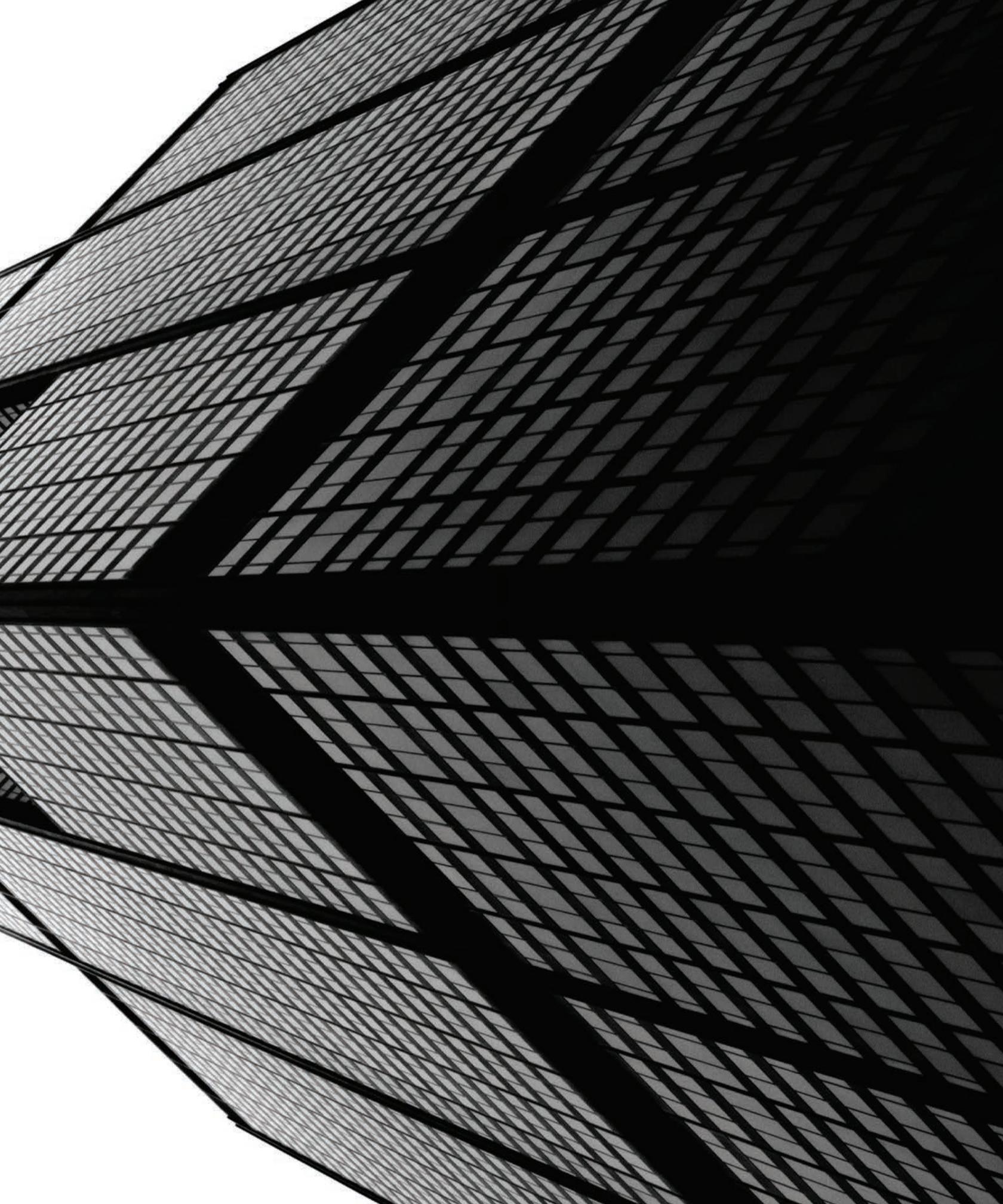
What keeps you ignited to continue forward, even when you don't know how and when God will bring you through?

What advice would you give to someone who is giving their best in a situation but is struggling to continue?









## DAY FOUR

**MATTHEW 14:22–33***New International Version (NIV)*

Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. <sup>23</sup> After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, <sup>24</sup> and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

<sup>25</sup> Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. <sup>26</sup> When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear.

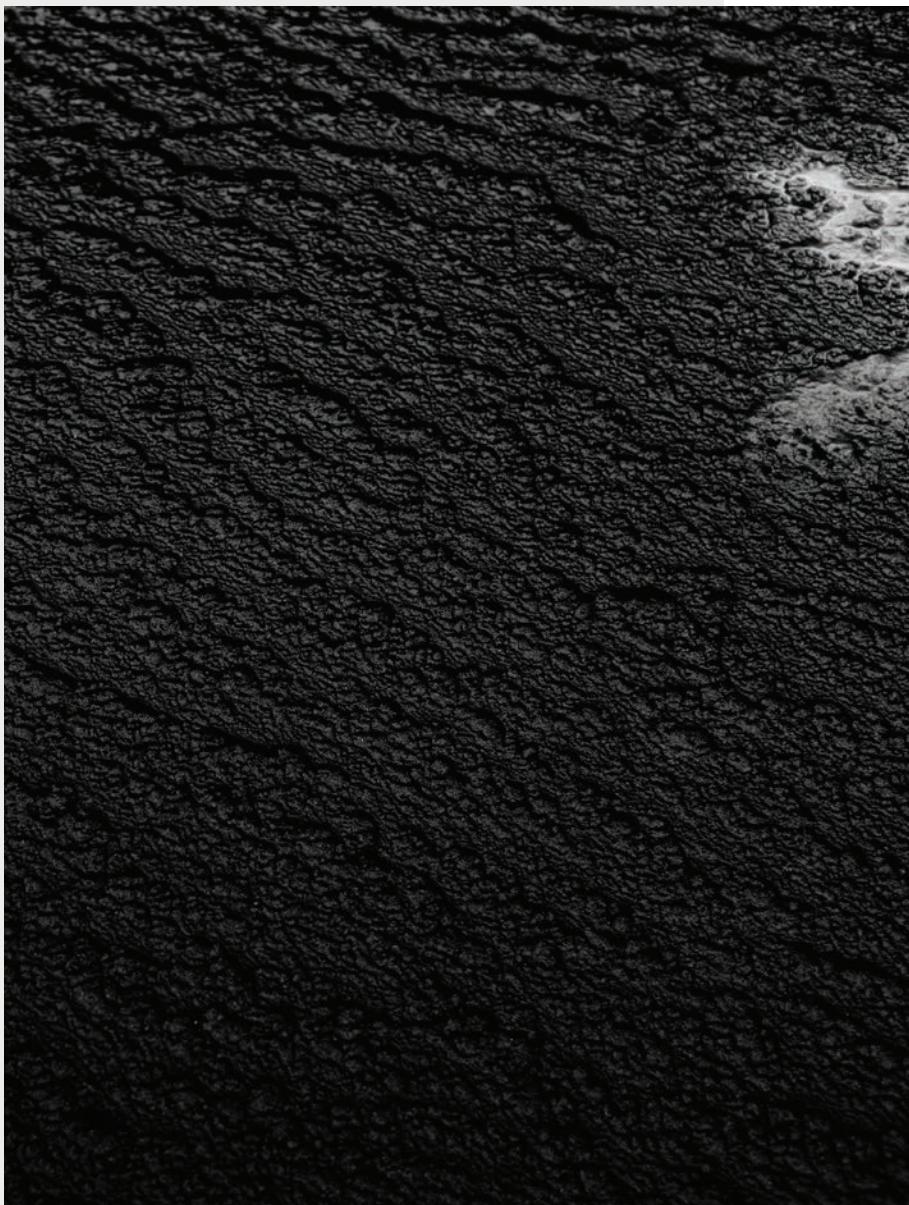
<sup>27</sup> But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

<sup>28</sup> “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.”

<sup>29</sup> “Come,” he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. <sup>30</sup> But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!”

<sup>31</sup> Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?”



## DAY FOUR

# HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Gospel of Matthew can be split into two halves, specifically when it is read from the perspective of the twelve disciples.

For the first 14 chapters of Matthew, Jesus teaches the twelve disciples about faith: Jesus teaches what faith is. Jesus heals through faith. Jesus tells parables (stories) about what a life of faith looks like.

When Jesus sends out His disciples to preach and heal in His name, He reminds them how to walk and live as faithful people.

Then chapter 14 hits.

All of a sudden, we start to read stories of Jesus' disciples being challenged to use their faith more.

Jesus feeds large crowds, and He invites the disciples to step up and be a part of it (Matthew 14:13–21, 15:29–39).

Jesus asks them to boldly declare their beliefs about His true identity (Matthew 16:13–20).

He challenges them to “deny themselves” and be willing to “lose their lives” for the sake of the Gospel (Matthew 16:21–28).

Jesus moves them from faith in theory to faith in practice.

And as part of the disciples' lesson in practicing faith, Jesus takes a trip out onto the water.



## DAY FOUR

## MORE FAITH

*Matthew 14:22–33*

It's possible to have doubt while also being faith filled. Peter is a man of extraordinary faith, yet we see moments when his faith was present with his doubts. By stepping out of the boat, Peter took a step of faith, but when his focus shifted to his surroundings, doubt caused him to sink. Faith challenges us to believe that we can do what may be naturally impossible. It requires us to have an unwavering focus on God.

All throughout Scripture, we see that God responds to our acts of faith. By faith many were healed and restored, and in Peter's case, literally saved from sinking. Faith is our response to God; it begins when things no longer make sense. It's the substance of things hoped for and evidence of things not yet seen (Hebrews 11:1).

When we find ourselves in moments of unbelief, when our focus shifts, we must ask God to help our unbelief. Our perspective determines our perception and our direction. By remembering who God is, repeating His promises back to Him, and declaring His glory, can help realign our will with His spirit. Focus on God and He will direct your path.

Choosing faith over doubt will draw you closer to who God created you to be. Let us put our faith in God, for it is the storms of life that water our seeds of faith.

## NOTES

### QUESTIONS

How may God be inviting you to step out in faith this week?

What is keeping you from living a life of unwavering faith?



## PRAYER

*Heavenly Father, I am sorry for the many times  
I doubt you. You have been incredibly  
faithful to me, and yet I struggle to live in bold  
faith. When I see the winds blow, when  
my situation feels unstable, when I don't feel your  
presence, please help me increase my faith and trust  
in you and your promises to me. Right now, in this  
moment, I choose to trust you, Lord, with my  
entire life—the present and the future.*

*You are my Rock.*

*Amen.*





## DAY FIVE

## LUKE 5:17–39

*New International Version (NIV)*

<sup>17</sup> One day Jesus was teaching, and Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. They had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal the sick. <sup>18</sup> Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. <sup>19</sup> When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus.

<sup>20</sup> When Jesus saw their faith, he said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven.”

<sup>21</sup> The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, “Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

<sup>22</sup> Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, “Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? <sup>23</sup> Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk?’ <sup>24</sup>

But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the paralyzed man, “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.” <sup>25</sup> Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. <sup>26</sup> Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, “We have seen remarkable things today.”

<sup>27</sup> After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. “Follow me,” Jesus said to him, <sup>28</sup> and Levi got up, left everything and followed him.

<sup>29</sup> Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. <sup>30</sup> But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”

<sup>31</sup> Jesus answered them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. <sup>32</sup> I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

<sup>33</sup> They said to him, “John’s disciples often fast and pray, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours go on eating and drinking.”

<sup>34</sup> Jesus answered, “Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? <sup>35</sup> But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; in those days they will fast.”

<sup>36</sup> He told them this parable: “No one tears a piece out of a new garment to patch an old one. Otherwise, they will have torn the new garment, and the patch from the new will not match the old. <sup>37</sup> And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. <sup>38</sup> No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins. <sup>39</sup> And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for they say, ‘The old is better.’”

## DAY FIVE

# HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Luke is one of four gospel writers in the Bible. These four books tell the story of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. While all four of these writers are telling the same story, they all highlight different aspects of Jesus' identity.

Luke specifically is deeply dedicated to tying Jesus to the story of Israel.

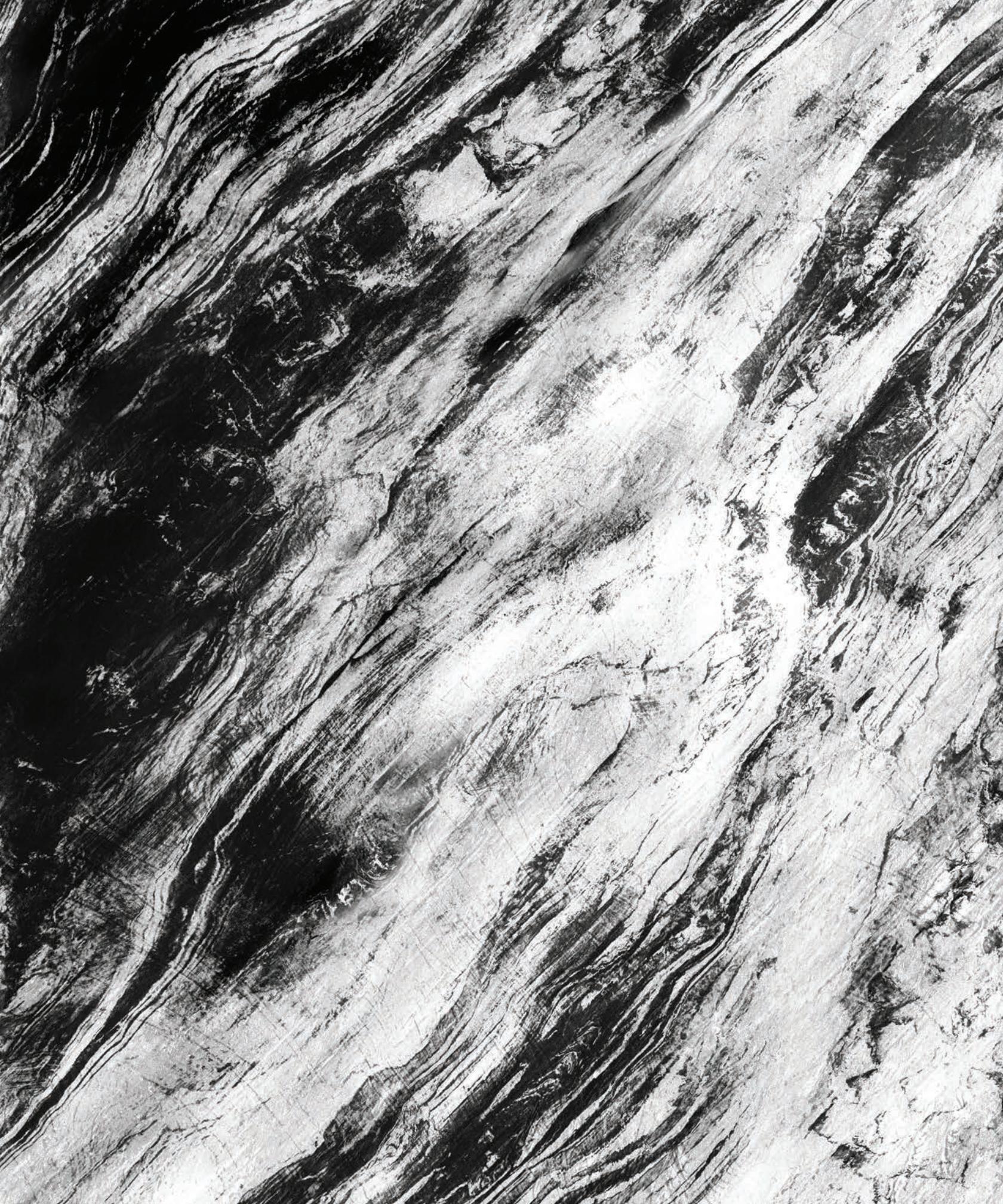
Remember when God parted the Red Sea for the Israelites to cross on dry land? Luke 3 shows God bringing Jesus through the water when He was baptized by John.

Remember when the Israelites wandered in the wilderness for 40 years because they were unable to be faithful to God? Luke 4 shows Jesus being tested in the wilderness for 40 days—and He remained faithful to God.

Remember how Israel has a history of slavery, oppression, exile, and poverty? Well, at the beginning of His ministry, Jesus stands up in the synagogue and says:

**The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim the good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor (Luke 4:18-19).**

Then Jesus illustrates the anointing. He heals the sick, the poor, the left out and looked over. Jesus shows how the power of faith heals and restores through His anointing. Luke 5 shows how our faith can help lead others to Christ.



## DAY FIVE

# MORE ROOM

*Luke 5:17–39*

When challenges arise, we can be quick to give up or decide there is no way out. Yet when we taste the goodness of God, when He reveals His power, authority, and love, it is impossible to resist sharing with others. When the men brought their paralytic friend to be healed, they were met with an obstacle. The size of the crowd prevented them from getting to Jesus. Yet creatively, his friends went up to the roof and lowered the man into the room right in front of Jesus. Not only was the man healed, but his sins were forgiven (Luke 5:17–20).

When we seek the face of God, we create opportunities for ourselves and others to experience His goodness, His love, His peace, His healing and forgiveness. We have to make room at our table and in our life for God and know that He wants to be with us. Jesus said, “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Luke 5:32). With all our imperfections and sins, Jesus says He has come for us, so that we “may have life, and have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

Life is not about how much you can pack into your days, it is about the impact your life can make every day. When we are excessively consumed with the things of this world, there is no space for God to do a great work in us and through us.

Let us evaluate how we spend our time and reserve space daily for time with our heavenly Father. He wants a relationship with you to reveal His purpose for your life. Invite Him in and allow Him to do a mighty work!

## NOTES

### QUESTIONS

How can you make more room for others to experience God through you this week?

Who can you share the love of Jesus with in your life?

What is one thing you can change in your life to make more time and space for God?









## DAY SIX

## JOHN 12:1–8

*New International Version (NIV)*

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.<sup>2</sup> Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him.<sup>3</sup> Then Mary took about a pint[a] of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

<sup>4</sup> But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected,<sup>5</sup> "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages."<sup>6</sup> He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

<sup>7</sup> "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial."<sup>8</sup> You will always have the poor among you,[c] but you will not always have me."



## DAY SIX

HISTORICAL  
CONTEXT

Let's start back in John 11.

Jesus receives word that His friend Lazarus has died.

John 11:5 tells us very clearly, "Jesus loved Martha and her sister [Mary] and Lazarus." But even if we didn't get that clue from the writer, we would be able to see Jesus' love by the actions He took next.

Immediately, Jesus tells His disciples that they are going to Bethany in Judea to visit Lazarus' grave. This may seem like the obvious thing to do when a friend dies, but Jesus actually did this at great danger to himself. Bethany was right near Jerusalem (see map). And there were many in Jerusalem who were plotting and ready to kill Him on sight. Yet Jesus' love for this family propelled Him to go.

Later on, we see Jesus break down weeping at the site of Lazarus' grave. The people watching recognize immediately the deep care Jesus has for His friend: "See how He loved him" (John 11:36).

But wait a minute ...

Jesus already knows that He will resurrect Lazarus. He has alluded to it several times already in the chapter (11:4, 11, 23). Is Jesus just doing this for dramatic effect?

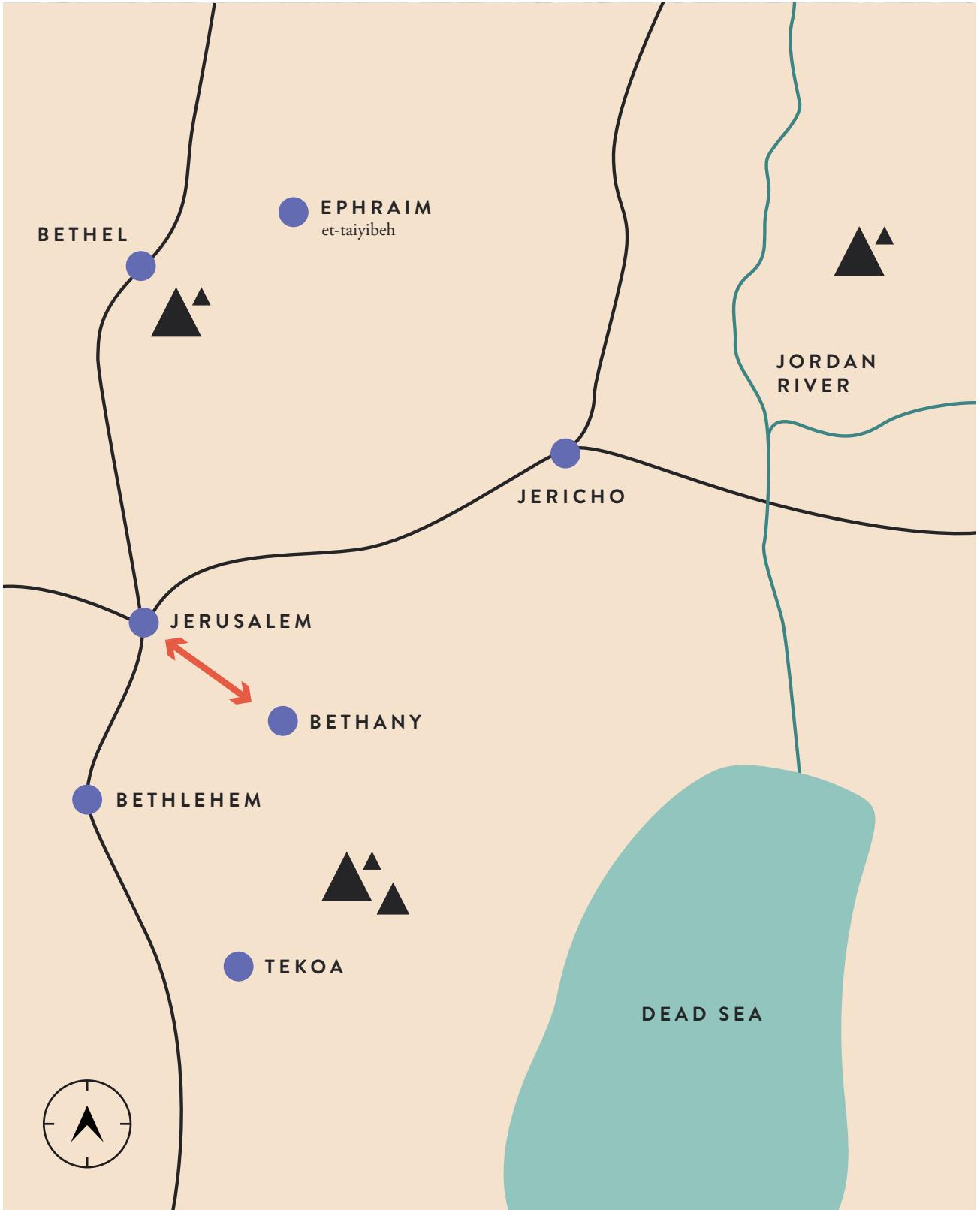
Or does Jesus empathize with Martha and Mary's pain in the loss of their brother, even though He knows it's not how the story will end?

Does Jesus love people so much that He cares about the difficulties they're facing, even though He knows they are temporary?

Yes. Jesus' great love is showcased in this passage, not just in His power to resurrect a dead man but in His willingness to show up for hurting people.

And as a result of the love Jesus showed Mary, she is motivated to show more love toward Him.

FIRST CENTURY JUDEA



## DAY SIX

## MORE LOVE

*John 12:1–8*

Mary demonstrates honor and reverence to the Lord by washing Jesus' feet with oil. The beauty of this sacrifice was that the oil was "worth a year's wages" (John 12:5), and she did not withhold one ounce.

While others considered it "wasteful," Jesus saw differently. He knew He would not always be with them. Mary's act of generosity fulfilled a purpose greater than she could have imagined—preparing her Savior for burial.

We may not know how God will use our resources, our time, and our talents, but God has a plan and a purpose for all of it. Mary loved God so much that she gave it all.

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37).

## NOTES

### QUESTIONS

What are you willing to sacrifice to honor God?

What are you withholding that God may be inviting you to give?

What is holding you back from loving Jesus with all your heart, soul, and mind?





*I've got this hunger  
I'm looking for the new  
This thirst is growing stronger  
My sights are set on You*

*I'm kicking off distractions  
I'm shaking off these chains*

**READY**  
*by Soul City Worship*

*I'm ready*

*Tear down walls  
Let dry bones rise  
Calm the storm  
Turn water to wine  
Sun stand still  
Open the sea  
Let your Kingdom come  
I'm ready, I'm ready*

*After You I come running  
I'm calling out Your name  
I'm calling out Your name*

*Fire by night  
Cloud by day  
I'll keep following  
Light the way*

*I'm laying down my future  
I'll leave the past behind  
I'm jumping into mercy  
No wave could drown this fire  
No wave could drown this fire*





## DAY SEVEN

## JOHN 15:1–11

*New International Version (NIV)*

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.<sup>2</sup> He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.<sup>3</sup> You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.<sup>4</sup> Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.<sup>5</sup> “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.<sup>6</sup> If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.<sup>7</sup> If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.<sup>8</sup> This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.<sup>9</sup> “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.<sup>10</sup> If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love.<sup>11</sup> I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.



## DAY SEVEN

# HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Throughout the Bible, God uses various pictures, parables, and metaphors to help us understand and know Him more.

God appears as a fire in the night to the Israelites, helping them learn that His presence is a guiding light not only in their wilderness journey but in every aspect of their lives (Exodus 13).

The poets in the book of Psalms refer to God as a rock, a fortress, a stronghold against the difficult, frustrating, and dangerous elements of life (Psalm 18).

The prophets describe the relationship between God and His people as a relationship between a loving Father and His children (Isaiah 63).

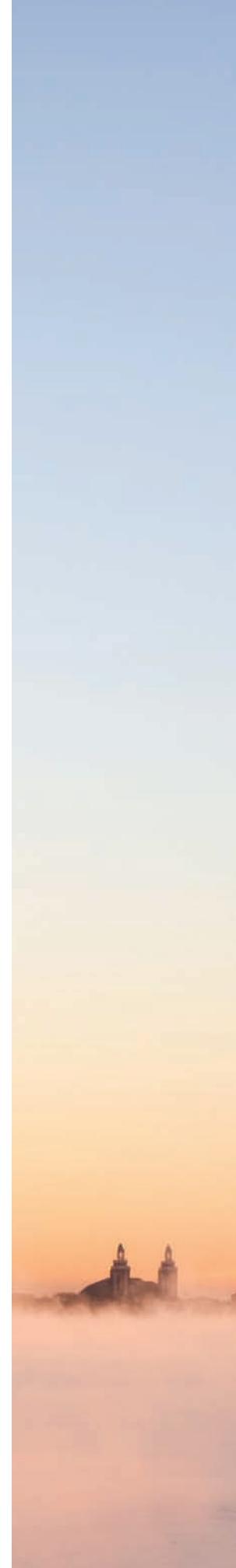
And when Jesus came to earth, He carried on this tradition of describing the identity of God in pictures and metaphors.

Jesus refers to Himself as a shepherd, a Good Shepherd who cares for his sheep (John 10).

Jesus is “the gate” or “the narrow path,” the only way to true life with God (John 10).

And in today’s passage, we read about Jesus as the vine, and this metaphor reveals to us more about the character of God.

Whether it’s a fire, a rock, a shepherd, bread, or a vine, the purpose of these metaphors and pictures is clear: God wants His people to see Him and recognize there is always more to know about Him.





## DAY SEVEN

## READY FOR MORE

*John 15:1–11*

Praying for more seems to inherently position our hearts in a posture of waiting, doesn't it? Whether it's spiritual fruit, a career transition, physical healing, or even a new relationship, *more* often carries the implicit understanding that our current realities are somehow less. If we aren't careful, it threatens to diminish the present into a waiting room for the future. But spiritually speaking, "waiting is more than resigning ourselves to delayed dreams because we have no other option. [It's] more than the patient endurance of the passage of time. [Rather], waiting captures a prayerful posture in our spirits of purposeful attentiveness toward God: looking toward Him, longing for Him" (Alicia Britt Chole, *Anonymous*).

Amidst prayers for more glory, more purpose, more perseverance, more faith, more room, and even more love, it's easy to lose sight of the fact that the *more* that matters most is ultimately knowing more of Jesus, what John refers to as "abiding in the vine." John, one of Jesus' closet disciples, likely experienced the freedom found in pursuing intimacy with our Creator rather than chasing a destination. When our gaze shifts from the Father to our own longings and ambitions, God quickly becomes a means to an end, a spiritual vehicle we use to get from point A to point B. Instead, we need to be like John, seeking a relationship with God and not just resources from God.

As we pray boldly and bravely for what's next, we can rest in the knowledge that fullness of joy isn't reserved for seasons marked by *more*. May we measure ourselves by our proximity to the Father, and may our eyes be ever locked on His.

## NOTES

### QUESTIONS

What might “abiding in the vine” look like in your everyday life?

What is one step you can take this week to develop a deeper understanding of God?









# CONTRIBUTORS



## JARRETT AND JEANNE STEVENS

### *A Message from Jarrett and Jeanne*

Jarrett and Jeanne are the co-founders and lead pastors at Soul City Church in Chicago. Jarrett and Jeanne are both respected leaders, speakers, and authors who have been privileged to share their gifts around the world. They have both been in full-time ministry for 25 years. They have been married for 23 years and have two kids, Elijah (14) and Gigi (11) and live in the West Loop of Chicago.



## NANCY BEACH

### *The Heart Behind More & Prayers*

Nancy Beach and her husband, Warren, have been part of Soul City Church for about seven years. Their daughter Johanna also calls Soul City Church home. Their other daughter, Samantha, lives in Austin, Texas, with her husband, Will. Nancy served in church ministry for more than 25 years prior to coming to Soul City Church. Currently, she is a Leadership Coach with the Slingshot Group. Nancy uses her teaching gifts at Soul City Church and at other churches and conferences.



## JON JORGENSON

### *Historical Context*

Jon Jorgenson is an author, Bible teacher, and YouTuber from Chicago. In addition to serving as a teaching pastor at Soul City Church, Jon partners with numerous organizations including Awana International, Moody Bible Institute, the Global Leadership Network, and hundreds of other churches, colleges, and conferences all around the country. Jon hopes to provide a fresh, unique voice to some of life's most difficult and challenging questions. Jon and his wife, Erin, live in Avondale with their dog, Buckets.



## CHRIS GRIFFIN

### *Ready For More Glory*

Chris, along with his wife, Angela, and daughters, Angel and Ashley reside on Chicago's west side. He has worked in ministry for 40 years and has a passion for Christian education and social justice issues. He and his family joined Soul City Church in 2015. Since then, he has worked with the Dad's Small Group, Men's Ministry, and Love Works, and has helped launch the Boomers Groups.



## ALLISON PAIGE

### *Ready For More Perseverance*

Allison Paige is a native Michigander. She has lived in Chicago for five years. She enjoys the performing arts; you can often find her at concerts, theatres, galleries or movies. Chicago has taught her the art of "brunching", so spending time with friends over brunch is a great pastime. Allison calls Soul City Church home and has valued how this church exemplifies God's tangible love for His people. She serves on the Creative/Tech Team as a producer, but she really enjoys being a gap-filler—she will jump right in, where help is needed.



## JENNY EMERY

### *Ready For More Purpose*

Jenny is married to Mark, an Elder at Soul City Church. They are blessed with three grown children, Thomas (Deirdre), Lucy, and Sophie. They left the UK in 1998, and after two years in Canada, moved to the Chicago area in 2000. They were fortunate to attend Alpha at the church, which began in 1990. Alpha has been their passion for the past 30 years, and they loved being part of establishing Alpha at Soul City Church.



**MARCUS MARSHALL**

*Ready For More Room*

Marcus joined Soul City Church six years ago and immediately felt the loving community and connection of the church. He enjoys reading and traveling to new places to experience different cultures and people. He lives in Oak Park and enjoys walking through the city. You can find him serving with the Connections team and welcoming guests on Sunday.



**STEVE TOLE**

*Ready For More Love*

Steve is an Elder at Soul City Church. He is married to Jenny and father to Sydney (10), Dana (7), Davis (6), and Colette (3). They have been attending Soul City Church since 2014. They have been transformed through worship and opportunities to serve together as a family with the Soul City Church community.



**TIMOTHY QUILES**

*Ready For More Faith*

Timothy is a union carpenter in Chicago. He is originally from Brooklyn, New York, where he met his wife. They currently live on the South Side of Chicago where they are raising three beautiful children. Timothy serves on the production team at Soul City Church as a cameraman for the live stream and recorded messages, and he also helps out with miscellaneous projects throughout the week.



**KELSEY BYRD**

*Ready For More*

Kelsey is born and raised in South Carolina. She moved to the Windy City almost four years ago and has called Soul City Church home ever since. She lives for God, Clemson football (#GoTigers), a good dance floor moment, and the life changing work that happens in small group circles around chips and guacamole. On Sundays, you can find her serving, pouring coffee in the café or talking someone's ear off about a new favorite tapas spot.



**RANDY CHEN**

*Designer*

Randy is an art director, designer and photographer. He was born and raised on the South Side of Chicago. He and his wife Allison have called Soul City Church home for six years. They have a 2 year old son, Parker and 2 adopted dogs, Molly and Abby. You can find him in the green room most Sundays or on stage playing electric guitar for Soul City Worship.



**JEREMY LOPEZ**

*Designer*

Jeremy is a worship leader in Chicago who loves connecting people to the presence of God through music. He has been writing and leading worship for 19 years and continues to discover a deep passion for expressing creativity in all its forms. He lives in a decommissioned firehouse with his wife of 13 years and their three daughters.





