



WELCOME TO EQUIP!

Congratulations on starting your Equip journey! This discipleship curriculum is designed to help you discover and live out your God-given calling. Over the course of twenty-four sessions, you'll build a strong foundation in your faith, clarify your purpose, and develop actionable goals for the future.

Here are a few things to keep in mind as you start your journey:

- Don't go through this material alone! **Equip is designed to be done with at least one other person.** We grow and learn best in community, so invite a family member, friend, or co-worker to join you on this journey. You can also sign up for a BAC Small Group that's going through this material.
- Let us know that you're going through Equip! **Use the QR code (right) to fill out a form and tell us that you're starting your Equip journey (click "Register Your Group").** Only one form is needed per group. If you are going through Equip with a BAC Small Group, you do NOT need to fill out a form.
- **Use the QR code (right) to access the Equip videos.** You can also visit our Equip webpage and click "Equip Video Playlist."
- Choose your pace! The weekly Equip sessions can be done consecutively or divided into three separate eight-week parts:
 - **Part 1:** Foundations & the Old Testament (Sessions 1-8)
 - **Part 2:** The New Testament & Key Doctrines (Sessions 9-16)
 - **Part 3:** Discover Your Calling (Sessions 17-24)
- Each individual session includes:
 1. An opening discussion
 2. A video (about 20 minutes)
 3. A discussion about the video
- If you have any questions, send an email to luke.cousino@bedfordalliance.church. I'm here to help!





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EQUIP #1: INTRODUCTION



OPENING DISCUSSION

What are you most looking forward to in this process? In what areas of the Christian life do you need to be equipped?

Watch Video #1



ADDRESSING A COMMON MYTH:

- The _____ Myth: The false idea that ministry must be done by “professionals”—by trained pastors or missionaries.
- Ephesians 4:11-12: “And he [Jesus] himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, **to equip the saints for the work of ministry...**”
- _____ is called to _____ ministry.
- Ephesians 4:16: “From him [Jesus] the whole body [the church], joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love **by the proper working of each individual part.**”



ILLUSTRATION:

The Church as a Ship:

1. _____: People expect to be entertained and want luxuries for the entire family.
2. _____: The church is in a battle for people’s souls, BUT the church organization as a whole does the fighting.
3. _____: The church equips and re-fuels people to make a difference where they live, work, and play.



PURPOSE OF THIS TRAINING:

To _____ you to make an eternal difference for God's glory.



BAC MISSION STATEMENT:

_____ people living out our God-given _____ as we

_____ in others to do the same.



VIDEO DISCUSSION:

1. What stood out to you about the story of Larry "Lawn Chair"? Do you agree that the American church has created Christians who are tired of "just sitting around"? Explain.
2. In what ways have you seen the "Holy Man Myth" play out in the church? How do you need to change your own thinking in this area?
3. What stood out to you about the illustration of the church as a ship? Which view do you think is most prevalent in America today?
4. What would it look like, practically, for BAC to become an "aircraft carrier"? What might your role be?
5. What stands out to you as you look at the BAC mission statement? What is your current understanding of your "God-given calling"?



EQUIP #2: READING GOD'S WORD



OPENING DISCUSSION

Do you spend regular time in God's Word? If yes, what does that time look like? If not, what obstacles do you face in building this habit?

Watch Video #2



WHY DO WE READ THE BIBLE?

1. The Bible contains everything we need to _____ Christians.

- 2 Timothy 3:15: "From infancy you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ."
- We can know some things about God through His _____.
- But it's only through His Word that we learn the _____.

2. The Bible contains everything we need to _____ as Christians.

- "Man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).
- God's Word is _____ for our souls.

3. We _____ what we _____.

- 2 Corinthians 3:18: "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another."
- Sam Storms: "You become like what you behold. Now, ask yourself: 'Why am I not becoming more like Jesus?' Perhaps the answer is found in what you are beholding. If the focus of your sight is the banal trash and mindless sensuality of TV and the internet and Facebook, is it any wonder that you aren't today substantially more like Jesus than you were a week ago, or a year ago?"



HOW DO WE READ THE BIBLE?

HEAR METHOD:

- _____ : What verse(s) stood out to you in your reading?
- _____ : What is the author's intended meaning in context?
- _____ : How do live this out?
- _____ : How do I need to pray?

SAMPLE HEAR JOURNAL:

Title: Secret of Contentment

Date: 11-1-2023

Passage: Philippians 4:10-13

H: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." -Philippians 4:13

E: No matter the situation in Paul's life, he realized Christ was all he needed to persevere through difficult times.

A: I need to remember that my contentment is not found in circumstances but in my relationship with Jesus. I will start each day this week by asking God to help me find contentment in Him alone.

R: Lord Jesus, help me find joy in you, not the things of this world. Through your strength, I can make it through any situation.



VIDEO DISCUSSION:

1. What stood out to you in this video?
2. What is a verse/passage of Scripture that has been especially impactful for you? Why?
3. What are your initial thoughts on the HEAR method of Bible journaling? How do you think this approach might impact your study of Scripture and your spiritual growth?
4. Do you agree with the principle, “We become what we behold”? How have you seen this principle play out in your life?
5. How will you apply what you’ve learned from this video? Which Bible reading plan will you use (if you’re not currently using one)? How will you use the HEAR method (or another method) to guide your time in the Word?

Note: Remember to bring a HEAR Journal or a passage that stands out to you from your devotions to share at the beginning of the next session.



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

- Reading Plans: Use the QR code (right) to access our BAC Reading Plan and other recommended plans.
- Study Bibles have commentary included with the text of Scripture. They can give you the context needed to better understand what you read. Here are a few recommended study Bibles:
 - ESV Study Bible (most theologically in-depth)
 - CSB Study Bible
 - NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible
 - NIV or NLT Life Application Study Bible (easiest to read)
- Recommended Books:
 - *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart
 - *Clarifying the Bible* by Mitch Maher
- **For a summary of Bible translations, see the following section, “Diving Deeper: Bible Translations.”**





WHICH BIBLE TRANSLATION SHOULD I READ?

This is a common question that's rarely addressed by churches.

You find yourself standing in a Christian bookstore or scrolling online looking for a Bible to buy, and you end up with more questions than answers.

Which translation should you choose—does it matter?

PUTTING THIS QUESTION IN PERSPECTIVE

Before addressing this question, we need to realize how blessed we are to even have this problem.

According to the Wycliffe Global Alliance, over 1,200 languages in the world today do not have a Bible translation, and no translation work is currently being done for those languages.¹

Another 1,200 languages have some portion of Scripture translated, but they don't yet have a full Bible or New Testament.

Meanwhile, hundreds of complete English translations have been published.

Therefore, we need to approach this topic with humility, realizing that we've been abundantly blessed with God's Word.

Many people in the world can't ask the question we're addressing today.

THREE MAIN APPROACHES TO TRANSLATION

With that background in mind, let's look at the three main approaches to translation: (1) word-for-word, (2) thought-for-thought, and (3) a mediating approach.

¹ wycliffe.net/resources/statistics

WORD-FOR-WORD

A word-for-word translation prioritizes reproducing the structure of the original language (Hebrew or Greek) into English.

In other words, translators try to find an exact English word for each word in the original language, and they attempt, as much as possible, to preserve the original sentence structure.

This approach can be especially helpful for deeper study. Since word-for-word translations often use the same English word(s) to translate the same Hebrew/Greek word(s), this approach allows readers to see word patterns and make connections throughout Scripture.

However, there are also downfalls to this approach.

Languages don't always correspond on a word-for-word basis. English words often have a different range of meanings than corresponding words in other languages.

For example, if we translate the Spanish phrase “¿Cómo se llama?” using a word-for-word approach, we might end up with something like, “How do you call yourself?”

However, this phrase *means*, “What is your name?”

Using an overly word-for-word approach can result in meaning being lost. It can also lead to awkward English, sometimes making translations more difficult to read.

Some of the most popular word-for-word translations include the New American Standard Bible (NASB), English Standard Version (ESV), King James Version (KJV), and New King James Version (NKJV).

THOUGHT-FOR-THOUGHT

In contrast to a word-for-word translation, a thought-for-thought translation focuses on meaning, not the form of the original language.

In other words, these translations attempt to accurately replicate the meaning of the original language in English—regardless if the original sentence structure is preserved.

Since meaning is the priority, these translations focus on using natural English, making them easy to read.

However, thought-for-thought translations can also obscure certain features or patterns in the original text.

For example, using a more thought-for-thought translation (the New Living Translation), Psalm 8:4 reads, “What are mere mortals that you should think about them, **human beings** that you should care for them?”

The phrase “*son of man*” is translated “*human beings*” in an attempt to preserve the original meaning.

However, Hebrews 2:6–8 applies this passage to Jesus, who is frequently called “the Son of Man” in Scripture (e.g., Matthew 8:20).

In this case, a thought-for-thought translation obscures a phrase that foreshadows Jesus.

As already mentioned, the New Living Translation (NLT) is one common example of a thought-for-thought translation.

MEDIATING APPROACH

Mediating translations recognize the strengths and weaknesses of both word-for-word and thought-for-thought approaches. They prioritize a word-for-word translation whenever possible but employ a thought-for-thought approach when necessary to convey accurate meaning.

Mediating translations can be effective “all-around” options that are both suitable for study and easy to read. However, they may not excel in any one area as much as more specialized translations.

Examples of mediating translations include the New International Version (NIV) and the Christian Standard Bible (CSB).

CHOOSING A TRANSLATION

Since all three approaches have strengths and weaknesses, it's always best to consult multiple translations (ideally one from each category).

But most people will want to pick one translation to use as their main Bible.

When it comes to choosing a primary translation, the most important factor is asking, "Which one will I actually read?"

All of the translations mentioned to this point are faithful and will lead you into a deeper relationship with Christ without doctrinal error.

Find the version that you enjoy reading and best suits your goals.

If your focus is deep study, you may want to consider a word-for-word translation (NASB or ESV).

If your focus is reading large sections of Scripture or sharing Scripture with children or nonbelievers, you may want to go with a thought-for-thought translation (NLT).

Finally, if you're seeking an "all-around" translation suitable for multiple uses, a mediating approach (CSB or NIV) may be best.

PARAPHRASES

Another type of translation to mention is "paraphrases."

All of the translations listed to this point were created by committees with dozens of scholars who have PhDs and proper credentials.

Paraphrases, on the other hand, are usually one person's interpretation of Scripture, and they fall far on the thought-for-thought side of the translation continuum (see next page).

Paraphrases can be helpful to consult, but we don't recommend using them as your primary Bible.

Examples of paraphrases include *The Message* by Eugene Peterson and *The Passion Translation* by Brian Simmons.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Whichever translation you choose, remember we're blessed to have an abundance of quality translations to choose from.

Consult multiple versions when you can, and choose a primary translation that motivates you to spend regular time in God's Word.

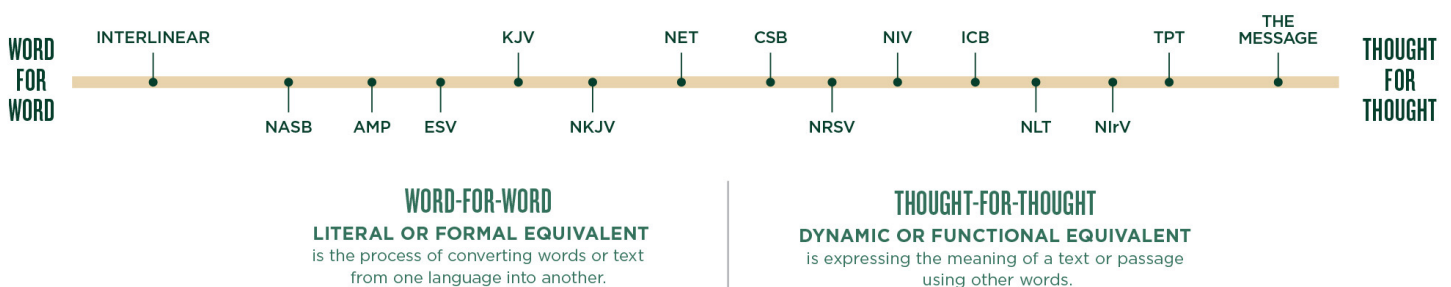
Regardless of the specific translation, God's Word is "living and active" (Hebrews 4:12).

Instead of spending time debating which translation is "best," let's spend time reading God's life-changing Word.

Take up and read!

BIBLE TRANSLATION CONTINUUM

*Bible translations shown in the top half of the chart are original translations directly from ancient languages to English.
Versions shown below the line began with the English text of another Bible translation.*



All versions of the Bible use a mix of both philosophies in an effort to produce a Bible that is both accurate and clear to the reader.

 **EQUIP #3: PRAYER** **DEVOTION DISCUSSION:**

How did God speak to you through His Word this past week? Share a HEAR Journal (see Equip #2) or a passage that stood out to you.

Watch Video #3 **WHAT IS PRAYER?**

- Prayer is _____ with God.

 **WHY DO WE PRAY?**

- We DON'T pray to _____ God what we need.
 - Matthew 6:8: "Your Father knows what you need before you ask him."
 - God is all-knowing!
- Prayer is first and foremost about _____.
- But prayer is also _____.
 - James 4:2: "You do not have because you do not ask."
 - James 5:16: "The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective."
 - Exodus 32:14 [In response to Moses' prayer for Israel]: "So the LORD relented concerning the disaster he had said he would bring on his people."
 - God uses our prayers to _____ His _____.

- John Piper: “The number one reason why prayer malfunctions in the hands of believers is that they try to turn a wartime walkie-talkie into a domestic intercom. Until you believe that life is war, you cannot know what prayer is for. Prayer is for the accomplishment of a wartime mission.”
- Our prayers are only effective because of _____.
- John 16:33: “Whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you.”
- Paul Miller: “Jesus gives our prayers royal access.”
- Praying “in Jesus’ name” doesn’t mean we just add that phrase onto the end of our prayers. It means we pray based on His authority and what He’s done for us.



HOW DO WE PRAY?

- Matthew 6:9-13 “This, then, is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”
- A simple tool to help you PRAY:
 - _____ “Hallowed by your name...”
 - _____ “Forgive us our debts...”
 - _____ “Give us today our daily bread...”
 - _____ “Your will be done...”
- Ask _____, surrender _____.

-
- Focus more on _____ and less on _____ itself.
 - Approach God like _____.
 - Don't try to _____ yourself before you pray.
 - Have a _____ time of prayer.
 - If you're having trouble staying focused:
 - Try praying out loud.
 - Try using index cards (one card per person or request).



VIDEO DISCUSSION:

1. What stood out to you in this video?
2. What does your prayer life look like currently? If someone were to observe your life from the outside, would your dependence on God be obvious?
3. What are the biggest challenges or obstacles to your prayer life?
4. The video talked about how prayer is first and foremost about relationship. How should this change the way we pray?
5. Do you ever struggle with feeling like prayer isn't effective? Why or why not?
6. Which of the practical tips did you find most useful? How will you apply these ideas to your prayer life?



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

- *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God* by Timothy Keller
- *A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World* by Paul Miller
- *Praying the Bible* by Donald Whitney



EQUIP #4: INTRO TO THE BIBLE



DEVOTION DISCUSSION:

How did God speak to you through His Word this past week? Share a HEAR Journal or a passage that stood out to you.

Watch Video #4



INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE

- The Bible (“the Book”) is the _____, _____, and _____ Word of God.
 - _____: God the Holy Spirit worked through the human authors of Scripture in such a way that they wrote the very words of God (2 Timothy 3:16; Mark 12:36; 2 Peter 1:21).
 - _____: When all the facts are known, and when it’s properly interpreted, the Bible will prove itself to be without error in all that it teaches (Proverbs 30:5; Numbers 23:19; Psalm 12:6).
 - _____: To obey or disobey Scripture is to obey or disobey God Himself (1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16).
- The Bible is a _____ book.
 - It was written over a period of about _____ years.
 - It was written by over _____ different authors from many walks of life (king, tax collector, doctor, fisherman, military leader, shepherd, etc.)
 - It was written in _____ different languages. The Old Testament was written mostly in Hebrew with sections of Aramaic. The New Testament was written in Greek.
 - It was written on _____ different continents (Asia, Africa, Europe).

-
- Despite its diversity, the Bible speaks with absolute _____ and _____ on the most controversial topics in life, proving there is ultimately one Author behind Scripture.
 - The Bible is _____ book that consists of _____ individual books.
 - The Bible's books are divided into _____ "testaments."
 - "Testament" is another word for "covenant."
 - The Old Testament (Genesis through Malachi) contains _____ books associated with the covenant God made with Israel.
 - The New Testament (Matthew through Revelation) contains _____ books describing God's covenant with mankind through Jesus Christ.
 - The chapter and verse numbers in Scripture are NOT _____.
 - Chapter numbers were added in _____.
 - Verse numbers were added in _____.
 - These numbers were added to help with commentaries and Bible study tools, but they shouldn't be treated as authoritative.
 - The big-picture of the Bible can be understood using five _____ divisions:
 1. _____ (Genesis - Malachi): "Salvation is coming!"
 2. _____ (Matthew - John): "Salvation is here!"
 3. _____ (Acts): "Let's proclaim the good news!"
 4. _____ (Romans - Jude): "Let's explain the good news!"
 5. _____ (Revelation): "Jesus will finish what He started!"



VIDEO DISCUSSION:

1. What stood out to you in this video? Did you learn anything new?
2. What section(s) of Scripture do you find most challenging to read? Why?
3. What questions, if any, do you still have about the terms “inspired, inerrant, and authoritative?” How would you explain these concepts to someone else?
4. Do you struggle with the idea that, in some cases, God used scribes and editors to assemble books of the Bible into final form? Why or why not?
5. How should knowing that chapter and verse numbers aren’t original to Scripture affect the way we read?



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

Reader’s Bibles remove chapters and verses from the text to help you read Scripture as the original authors intended. Using a reader’s Bible alongside other forms of Scripture (such as a study Bible) can prevent you from only reading small sections of Scripture. Here are a few recommended reader’s editions:

- *ESV Reader’s Bible* (one-volume and six-volume editions available)
- *CSB Reader’s Bible* (one-volume and five-volume editions available)
- *The Books of the Bible* (four-volume set in the NIV translation)
- *Immerse: The Reader’s Bible* (six-volume set in the NLT translation)



EQUIP #5: INTRO TO THE OLD TESTAMENT



DEVOTION DISCUSSION:

How did God speak to you through His Word this past week? Share a HEAR Journal or a passage that stood out to you.

Watch Video #5



INTRO TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

- The importance of the Old Testament:
 - The Old Testament was Jesus' only Scripture and makes up _____ of our Bibles.
 - Jesus said the _____ Old Testament points to Him (Luke 24:44).
 - God gave the Old Testament for _____ (Romans 15:4).
 - The New Testament references the Old Testament about _____ times!

<i>New Testament Book</i>	<i>OT References</i>	<i>New Testament Book</i>	<i>OT References</i>
Matthew	96	Colossians	3
Mark	34	1 Thessalonians	2
Luke	58	2 Thessalonians	2
John	40	1 Timothy	6
Acts	57	2 Timothy	2
Romans	74	Hebrews	86
1 Corinthians	41	James	16
2 Corinthians	13	1 Peter	20
Galatians	16	2 Peter	10
Ephesians	11	1 John	6
Philippians	3	Revelation	249
		Total	855

- The Old Testament contains _____ books written _____ the birth of Jesus.
- The Old Testament tells the story of _____ (Abraham’s descendants).
- The 39 books of the Old Testament can be divided into:
 - _____ Historical Books (Genesis through Esther)
 - _____ Poetical Books (Job through Song of Solomon)
 - _____ Prophetical Books (Isaiah through Malachi)

THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

<i>Historical</i>	<i>Poetical</i>	<i>Prophetical</i>
Genesis	Job	Isaiah
Exodus	Psalms	Jeremiah
Leviticus	Proverbs	Lamentations
Numbers	Ecclesiastes	Ezekiel
Deuteronomy	Song of Solomon	Daniel
Joshua		Hosea
Judges		Joel
Ruth		Amos
1 Samuel		Obadiah
2 Samuel		Jonah
1 Kings		Micah
2 Kings		Nahum
1 Chronicles		Habakkuk
2 Chronicles		Zephaniah
Ezra		Haggai
Nehemiah		Zechariah
Esther		Malachi

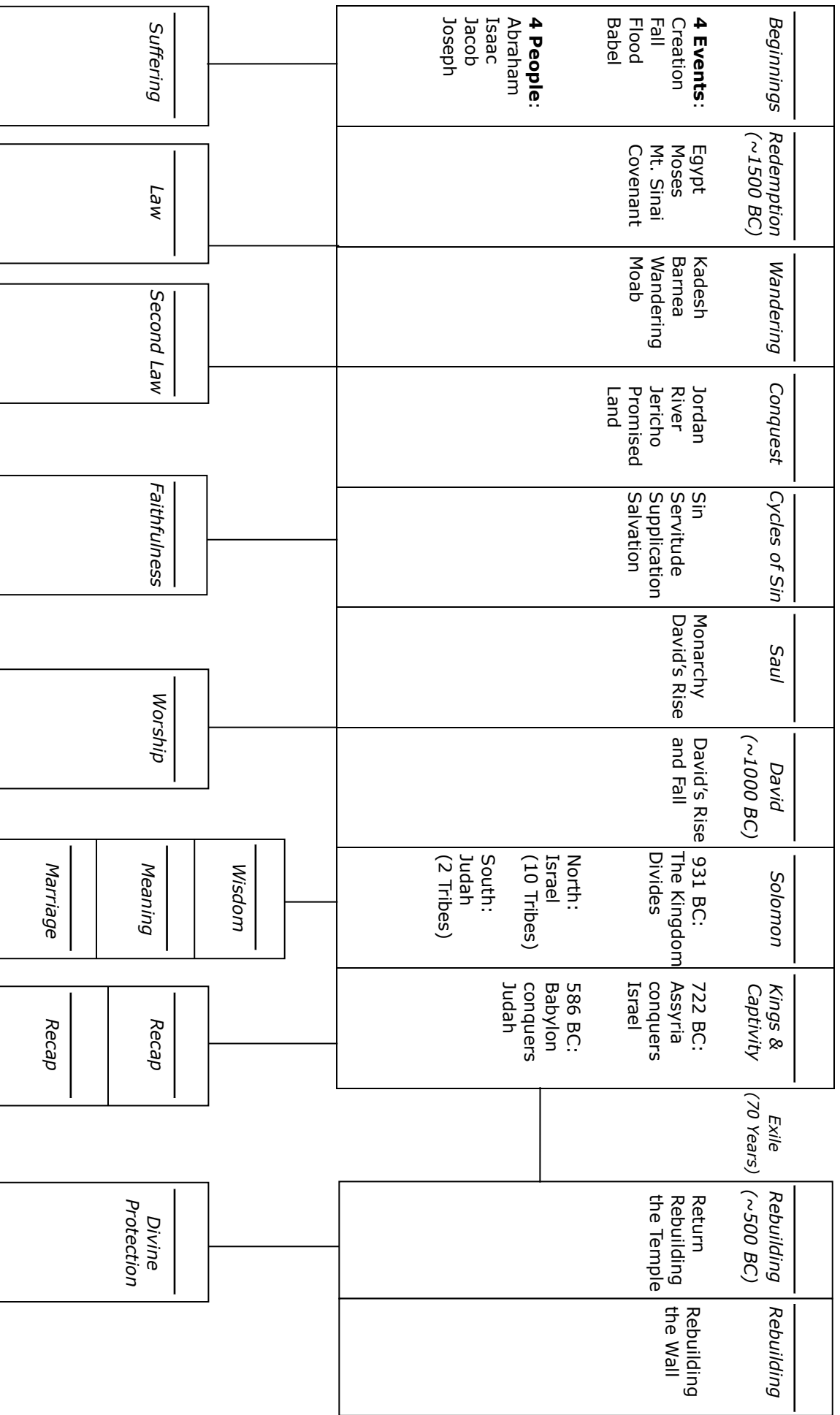
- The 17 historical books provide the main _____ of the Old Testament (from Creation to about 400 BC), while the 5 poetical and 17 prophetical books provide _____ along the way.

VIDEO DISCUSSION PART 1:

1. What stood out to you in the video?
2. How would you respond to someone who says that the Old Testament ‘isn’t important’?



TIMELINE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT





VIDEO DISCUSSION PART 2:

1. Have you ever heard the Old Testament story told in one sitting? How did hearing the story change your view of Scripture?
2. As you take a 30,000-foot view of the Old Testament, what takeaways can we draw? What can we learn about God? What can we learn about mankind?
3. Do you ever struggle with thinking that the God of the Old Testament is different from the God of the New Testament? Why or why not? Did today's lesson change that?



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

- The *BibleProject* has animated video summaries of the Old and New Testaments and of each book of the Bible. Search “BibleProject” on YouTube, or visit bibleproject.com to watch these videos.
- *Knowing Jesus through the Old Testament* by Christopher J.H. Wright
- *Christ from Beginning to End: How the Full Story of Scripture Reveals the Full Glory of Christ* by Trent Hunter and Stephen Wellum
- For an in-depth analysis of the cultural context of the Old Testament: *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament* by John Walton
- *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* by John Walton, Victor Matthews, and Mark Chavalas

EQUIP #6: THE HISTORICAL BOOKS

DEVOTION DISCUSSION:

How did God speak to you through His Word this past week? Share a HEAR Journal or a passage that stood out to you.

Watch Video #6

INTRO TO THE HISTORICAL BOOKS

The story of the 17 historical books (Genesis-Esther) can be summarized with nine eras:



(Genesis 1-11)



(Genesis 12-50)



(Exodus-Deut.)



(Joshua)



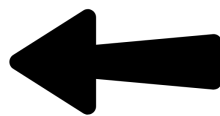
(Judges)



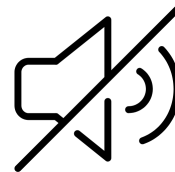
(1 Sam.-2 Chron.)



(2 Kings 17, 25)



(Ezra-Esther)



(Intertestament)

The historical books contain two primary genres: _____ and _____.



OLD TESTAMENT NARRATIVE

Narrative is the most common type of literature in Scripture, making up about _____ of the Bible.

Definition: Narratives are _____ stories that retell historical events of the past to give meaning and direction to a given people in the present.

Keys to Reading Old Testament Narratives:

- _____ is key.
- Narrative is _____, NOT _____.
- Narratives often teach us _____.
- Material in narratives is _____ and arranged _____.
- Narratives were originally made for _____, not readers, so _____ is common. Use it as a clue to what's important.
- Remember that _____ is the hero of all Old Testament narratives.



OLD TESTAMENT LAW

Why did God give Israel the Law?

- They were in slavery in Egypt for 400 years.
- They had to learn how to function as a _____ while remaining _____ to God.

Keys to Understanding Old Testament Law:

- The Law was given to _____ people in a _____ context.
- The Law set Israel _____ from the nations.
- Nobody was _____ by following the Old Testament Law (Galatians 3:11).
- The Israelites were saved by _____ (Genesis 15:6).
- Animal sacrifices, when offered in _____, temporarily _____ Israel's sins, allowing them to maintain their relationship with God.
- Animal sacrifices pointed to the need for a _____ sacrifice (Hebrews 10).
- Jesus _____ the Law for us (Matthew 5:17).
- Christians are no longer _____ by the Law (Romans 7:6).
- Only what is directly _____ from the Old Testament Law can be considered part of the New Testament "Law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).
- Even though the Law isn't God's direct _____ to us, it's still the _____ for us.



VIDEO DISCUSSION:

1. What stood out to you in this video?
2. Now that you've heard the entire story of the Old Testament, are there any individual stories that make more sense to you? Explain.
3. Which of the "Keys to Understanding Old Testament Narrative" did you find most helpful? Why?
4. What are some common ways we misuse narratives in Scripture?
5. How did the video help you understand the purpose of the Old Testament Law?
6. How would you respond to somebody who says that Christians are inconsistent for not obeying certain commands in the Bible, such as the instruction to not eat shellfish (Leviticus 11:9-10)? What verses/passages would you point him/her to?



EQUIP #7: THE POETICAL BOOKS



DEVOTION DISCUSSION:

How did God speak to you through His Word this past week? Share a HEAR Journal or a passage that stood out to you.

Watch Video #7



INTRO TO THE POETICAL BOOKS

- After narrative, _____ is the second-most common genre in Scripture.
- The five poetical books don't advance the story of the Old Testament. The story pauses for teaching on _____ with God and living _____ with each other.
- Divine speech is _____ in the poetical books.
- These books record _____ responses to the story of the Old Testament.
- **Key Theme:** The _____ of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.
 - Fear of the LORD *doesn't* mean being _____ of God.
 - It means living with _____ and _____ for God.



THE PSALMS

- A psalm is a _____.
- _____ of the 150 Psalms are attributed to David.
- But they were written and collected over a long period of time, starting as early as _____ (Psalm 90) until after the exile.

- The Psalms are grouped into _____ books that each end with a statement of praise (see below). This division likely reflects the _____ books of the Law (Genesis through Deuteronomy).

Book	Contents	Ending
Book 1	Psalms 1-41	“Praise be to the LORD... Amen and Amen” (41:13).
Book 2	Psalms 42-72	“Praise be to his glorious name forever... Amen and Amen” (72:10).
Book 3	Psalms 73-89	“Praise be to the LORD forever! Amen and Amen” (89:52).
Book 4	Psalms 90-106	“Praise be to the LORD... Let all the people say, ‘Amen!’ Praise the LORD.” (106:48).
Book 5	Psalms 107-150	“Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD” (150:6).

- There are two main types of Psalms: _____ and _____.

 - _____ Psalms contain statements of praise and thanksgiving for who God is and what He’s done.
 - _____ Psalms record honest expressions of pain and sorrow. BUT they usually end with a statement of _____ in the LORD.

- The Psalms present a full range of human _____.
- The Psalms help us express ourselves in a variety of _____.

• Keys for Reading:

- Look for _____.

 - Example: Psalm 19:1

*The heavens declare the glory of God;
The skies proclaim the work of his hands.*

- Pay attention to _____ Psalms, not just individual verses.
- Look for _____ in the Psalms (Psalm 2, 22, 110).
- _____ the Psalms!



PROVERBS

- Most of the Proverbs were written and assembled by _____.
- Main Idea: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge” (1:7).
- Key Characters:
 - The _____: Someone who humbly submits to God’s rule and seeks to live in the fear of the LORD.
 - The _____: Someone who doesn’t submit to God’s rule. They’re ‘wise’ in their own eyes.
 - The _____: Someone who isn’t fully committed to wisdom OR foolishness. They’re easily led astray.
- Proverbs is a very _____ book. It covers topics such as friendship, work, marriage, children, finances, etc.
- **Key for Reading:**
 - Proverbs contains general _____, NOT _____.



JOB

- Job is the type of person that _____ envisions. He’s a wise man who honors the LORD.
- The Story of Job:
 - God allows Satan to test Job (1:12).
 - Job loses his children, his possessions, and his health (1:13–19; 2:7–8).

-
- His wife turns on him (2:9).
 - His friends give him bad advice (4-37). They make the mistake of thinking Job's suffering is caused by sin in his life.
 - Job begins to question God (31).
 - God responds with a series of questions that demonstrate His power and sovereignty (38-41).
 - Job is vindicated and blessed with more than he started with (42).
- God never gives a _____ answer to Job's suffering.
 - **Key Takeaways:**
 1. God is sovereign. He's in control over all our circumstances.
 2. God is always just in what He does, but He doesn't always explain His justice.
 3. God wants us to trust Him, even when our circumstances are difficult.

- **Key for Reading:**

- Pay attention to who's _____!



ECCLESIASTES

- Ecclesiastes records Solomon's search for _____.
- He says that life lived apart from God's rule is _____ (12:8).

- **Key for Reading:**

- Read Ecclesiastes in light of its _____ (12:13).

"Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind" (Ecclesiastes 12:13).



SONG OF SONGS

- Song of Songs celebrates _____ love between a man and a woman.
- Three main characters:
 - “Beloved”—the man
 - “Lover”—the woman
 - “Daughters of Jerusalem”—the woman’s friends
- The book consists of short songs that the man and woman sing to each other; the friends also sing at times.
- **Key for Reading:**
 - Avoid over-_____ Song of Songs.



WRAPPING UP

See how the ‘wisdom’ books work _____.

- **Proverbs:** “If you follow these general principles, your life will usually look like this.”
 - **Job:** “Even when life doesn’t follow the principles of Proverbs, God is still in control.”
 - **Ecclesiastes:** “Even if you follow all the principles of Proverbs, it’s all meaningless without faith and fear of the LORD.”
 - **Song of Songs:** “Life isn’t all about the principles and rational living of Proverbs—love and intimacy are important.”

Look for *fear of the LORD* throughout these books!



VIDEO DISCUSSION:

1. What stood out to you in this video?
2. How did the video help you better understand the poetical books and their role in Scripture?
3. Knowing that the Psalms reflect a wide range of human emotion, what implications does this have for our prayer lives? How can we use the Psalms to guide our own prayers?
4. Read Psalm 22:1-18 as a group. How does this Psalm point to Jesus? Where is this Psalm quoted in the New Testament?
5. How does “fear of the LORD” (or a lack thereof) affect the way we live on a daily basis? Would you say you currently live in the fear of the LORD?



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

- *The Songs of Jesus: A Year of Daily Devotions in the Psalms* by Tim and Kathy Keller
- *God’s Wisdom for Navigating Life: A Year of Daily Devotions in the Book of Proverbs* by Tim and Kathy Keller
- *Psalms in 30 Days* by Trevin Wax (Editor)
- *Praying the Bible* by Donald Whitney



EQUIP #8: THE PROPHETICAL BOOKS



DEVOTION DISCUSSION:

How did God speak to you through His Word this past week? Share a HEAR Journal or a passage that stood out to you.

Watch Video #8



WHO ARE THE PROPHETS?

- The prophets provide _____ commentary on the Old Testament story.
- The prophets are God's _____. They are people called by God to speak His message to His people.
- The main role of the prophets was to be covenant _____.



WHAT DID THE PROPHETS SPEAK?

Almost all of the material in the prophets can be grouped into three major categories:

1. _____

- “You (Israel and/or Judah) have sinned and broken the covenant. Repent!”
- The prophets often act like God’s “prosecuting attorneys” and list specific ways God’s people have broken the covenant, including:
 - Idolatry: worshipping false gods of other nations.
 - Social injustice: not caring for the poor, widows, orphans, and foreigners.
 - Religious ritualism: going through the motions while their hearts are far from God.

-
- The prophets often use poetic language and analogies to call God’s people out for their sins (e.g. comparing them to an unfaithful spouse).

2. _____

- “If you don’t repent, judgment is coming! You will face the curses listed in Deuteronomy 28.”
- Some prophets write during the exile, so we see both predictions and fulfillment of judgment.
- The prophets contain repeated references to the “Day of the LORD.”
 - This refers to when God will bring justice—when He will judge the wicked who have turned from Him and bring salvation to those who trust Him.
 - There are “days of the LORD” when this is partially fulfilled (e.g., when Israel and Judah are taken into exile).
 - There will also be a singular “Day of the LORD” in the future when Christ will return, and final justice will be served.

3. _____

- The exile isn’t permanent; God hasn’t abandoned His people.
- There will be a New Covenant that will be written on people’s hearts (Jeremiah 31), and God’s Spirit will dwell inside His people (Joel 2).
- There will be a new creation—a new heaven and new earth (Isaiah 65).
- All of this will be accomplished by a coming King, the Messiah, who will not only restore Israel but will gather Gentiles to Himself and rule over all creation.



WHEN DID THE PROPHETS SPEAK?

Northern Kingdom of _____

Amos
Hosea
722 BC: _____
conquers Israel
(2 Kings 17)

931 BC: The Kingdom
_____ (1 Kings 12)

586 BC: _____
conquers Judah
(2 Kings 25)

Joel
Isaiah
Micah
Zephaniah
Habakkuk
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Daniel
Ezekiel

Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

Southern Kingdom of _____

1051 BC 1011 BC 971 BC

-
- There are three prophets that don't fit into the diagram on the previous page:
 1. _____ declares judgment against Edom, one of Israel's neighbors.
 2. _____ declares judgment against Ninevah, a city in Assyria.
 3. _____ preaches directly to the Assyrians in Nineveh. BUT his message is probably directed to Israel and Judah, because the Ninevites do what God's people don't—repent.
 - Summary: The prophets preached during a 340-year period (_____ BC - _____ BC), during which Israel and Judah were reduced from independent nations to a single, pitiful remnant (Judah).
 - The categories of "major" and "minor" prophets are based on _____, NOT _____.



HOW CAN WE APPLY THE PROPHETS' MESSAGE?

1. Sin has real _____.
2. God wants a _____ with us, NOT _____.
3. God is _____ and has a plan, even when all seems lost.



VIDEO DISCUSSION:

1. How did the video change the way you view the prophets?
2. The prophets called out Israel for idolatry, social injustice, and religious ritualism. Do you think these sins are still an issue in the church today? Explain.
3. Read Jeremiah 31:31-34. Based on this passage, what are the differences between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant?
4. Which of the applications from the prophets' do you most need to apply to your current circumstances? Explain.



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

- *How to Read and Understand the Biblical Prophets* by Peter Gentry
- *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart



EQUIP #9: INTRO TO THE NEW TESTAMENT



DEVOTION DISCUSSION:

How did God speak to you through His Word this past week? Share a HEAR Journal or a passage that stood out to you.

Watch Video #9



THE TIME BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

- This period is often referred to as the _____ period. After the final Old Testament prophets spoke around 430 BC, there were no inspired words from God until the start of the New Testament.
- The _____ books were written during this period.
 - *Apocrypha* means “hidden” or “secret.”
 - Reasons we do NOT consider these books part of God’s inspired Word:
 1. They don’t claim to be God’s Word. In fact, these books acknowledge that there were no inspired prophets at the time they were written.
 2. The Jews, who wrote most of the Apocrypha, never accepted these books as part of the Old Testament canon.
 3. They weren’t considered Scripture by Jesus or the Apostles. The New Testament cites nearly every book of the Old Testament, with only a few exceptions.¹ The Apocrypha, however, is never cited.
 4. These books contain documented historical and factual errors.
 5. These books contain teachings inconsistent with the rest of Scripture, including works-based righteousness, praying for the dead, and purgatory.

¹The New Testament contains no direct references to Ezra/Nehemiah, Esther, Ecclesiastes, or the Song of Songs. However, there may be indirect allusions to these books, and they were considered part of the Old Testament canon long before the time of Christ.

- Even though there was no inspired word from God during this time, God was still working behind the scenes to _____ the way for His Son.
 - _____ Empire (934–609 BC): Took the northern kingdom of Israel into exile in 722 BC.
 - _____ Empire (626–539 BC): Took the southern kingdom of Judah into exile in 586 BC.
 - _____ Empire (539–331 BC): Allowed the Jews to return to the Promised Land to begin rebuilding.
 - _____ Empire (336–323 BC): Established the Greek culture and language throughout the region (a process called “hellenization”). This helped pave the way for the Gospel to spread quickly in the first century.
 - _____ Empire (27 BC–476 AD): Established an extensive road network and brought relative political stability throughout the region. Rome’s travel networks and citizen rights allowed Paul (and other early Christians) to spread the Gospel more effectively.



THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE



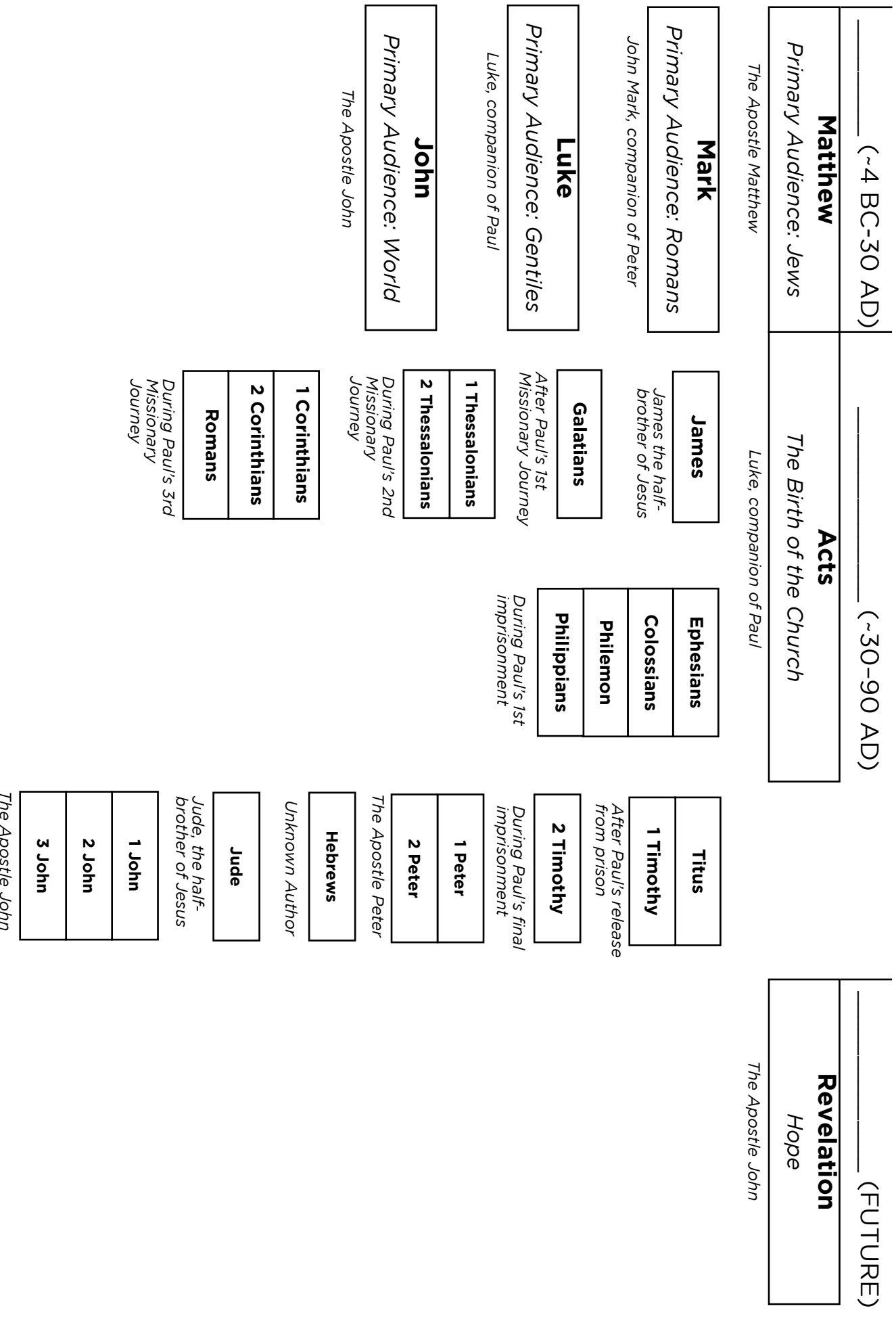


KEY TERMS TO KNOW

- _____: A Jewish religious group that followed the Law of Moses AND oral traditions. They were the largest of the Jewish religious sects.
- _____: A Jewish religious group that followed only the Law of Moses. They controlled the priesthood and held positions of authority.
- _____: The “Supreme Court” of the Jews, made up of 70 elders and the High Priest.
- _____: Local places of instruction and worship that originated following the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 586 BC.
- _____: Jewish teachers.
- _____: Non-Jewish people.



TIMELINE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT





KEY IDEA:

In the Old Testament, Israel reached others through a _____ approach.
In the New Testament, the strategy shifts to _____.

Why the difference? In the Old Testament, God's presence dwelled in the temple in Jerusalem. Now, God's Holy Spirit dwells in all believers of Jesus Christ. *We are the temple!* And we take God's presence with us to the world.



VIDEO DISCUSSION:

1. What stood out to you in this video?
2. Which of the arguments against the Apocryphal books being Scripture did you find most convincing? Why?
3. What stood out to you about the historical context of the time between the Testaments?
4. What clarity did you gain from the discussion about the geography, key terms, and timeline of the New Testament?
5. How should the "go-and-tell" approach of the New Testament affect the way we think about making a difference for God's Kingdom? In what ways do you think we fall back into a "come-and-see" philosophy?



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

- *New Testament Handbook* by Holman (contains commentary, charts, maps, outlines, timelines, and word studies)
- *An Introduction to the New Testament* by D.A. Carson and Doug Moo
- *Scribes and Scripture: The Amazing Story of How We Got the Bible* by John Meade and Peter Gurry



EQUIP #10: THE GOSPELS



DEVOTION DISCUSSION:

How did God speak to you through His Word this past week? Share a HEAR Journal or a passage that stood out to you.

Watch Video #10



INTRO TO THE GOSPELS

- “Gospel” means _____.
- Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the _____ Gospels because they share similar content.
- Over _____ of the Gospel of John is unique.
- The four gospels were written by four different authors addressing four different audiences with four different _____ in mind.
- **Matthew:**
 - Author: Matthew, one of the twelve disciples (Matthew 9:9-13)
 - Audience: _____
 - Purpose: To show his Jewish audience that Jesus is the Messiah who _____ Old Testament prophecy and expectations
- **Mark**
 - Author: Mark, a companion of Peter (1 Peter 5:13)
 - Audience: _____ Christians
 - Purpose: To portray Jesus as the _____ servant of God and give hope to his persecuted audience

• **Luke**

- Author: Luke, a companion of Paul (Acts 16:11; 2 Timothy 4:11)
- Audience: Theophilus most immediately (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1) but all _____ more broadly
- Purpose: To show that Jesus is the Savior of _____ people

• **John**

- Author: John, the disciple whom Jesus loved (John 13:23; John 21:24)
- Audience: The _____ (a timeless, universal audience)
- Purpose: So people will _____ that Jesus is the Son of God and, in doing so, receive eternal life



WHAT IS THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPELS?

- Jesus is _____ in the _____ (John 1:1-14).
- Jesus fulfilled Old Testament _____ and _____.
- Jesus' life paralleled Israel's _____ (see below).

<i>Israel</i>	<i>Jesus</i>
Pharaoh orders that all Israelite boys be killed at birth. But Moses, Israel's deliverer, escapes (Exodus 1-2).	King Herod orders that all boys two years old and younger be killed in and around Bethlehem, but Jesus escapes with His family (Matthew 2:13-16).
Flees to Egypt to escape a deadly famine (Genesis 46).	Flees to Egypt to escape Herod's death threats (Matthew 2:13-16).
Wandered in the wilderness for 40 years (Numbers 14:34).	Was tempted in the wilderness for 40 days (Matthew 4:1-11).
Crossed the Jordan River to enter the Promised Land (Joshua 3).	Was baptized in the Jordan River before beginning His ministry (Matthew 3:13-17).
Had 12 sons or tribes (Genesis 49:28).	Had 12 disciples (Matthew 10:2).

-
- Jesus was the ultimate _____.
 - Jesus defeated _____ and _____.
 - Jesus offers _____ and _____ life to all who believe in Him.
 - Jesus' miracles _____ a New Creation.

HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND?

- The only proper response to the Gospels is total _____ to Jesus.
- Following Jesus means He comes _____ in our lives—before our relationships, our possessions, and even our own lives (Luke 14:25-27).
- The _____ of following Jesus is high (Luke 14:28-33).
- But He is more than _____ it (Matthew 13:44).

VIDEO DISCUSSION:

1. What stood out to you in this video?
2. How does knowing the author, audience, and purpose of the four Gospels change your understanding of these books?
3. How did the video help you understand the connection between the Gospels and the Old Testament story?
4. Read Luke 14:25–33 as a group. Have you ever considered the cost of following Jesus? How has it cost you in the past, and how might it cost you in the future?
5. Read Matthew 13:44 again. Do you live like the man in the parable? Why or why not?
6. Have you ever surrendered your life to Christ? If so, what do you need to surrender to *deepen* your walk with Christ?

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

- *Follow Me: A Call to Die. A Call to Live.* By David Platt
- *Handbook on the Gospels* by Benjamin Gladd



EQUIP #11: ACTS & THE LETTERS



DEVOTION DISCUSSION:

How did God speak to you through His Word this past week? Share a HEAR Journal or a passage that stood out to you.

Watch Video #11



THE BOOK OF ACTS

- Acts is the _____ to the Gospels.
- Acts 1:8: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in **Jerusalem**, and in all **Judea and Samaria**, and to the **ends of the earth**.”
 - Acts 1-7: _____
 - Acts 8-12: _____
 - Acts 13-28: _____
- **Key Takeaways:**
 - The Gospel advances through the power of the _____ (Acts 1:4, 1:8).
 - _____ propels the Gospel forward (Acts 8:1, 8:4).



THE LETTERS

- Paul’s 13 letters are arranged from _____ to _____ in our Bibles, but they’re best understood in their _____ context.



➔After Paul's first missionary journey, he writes _____.



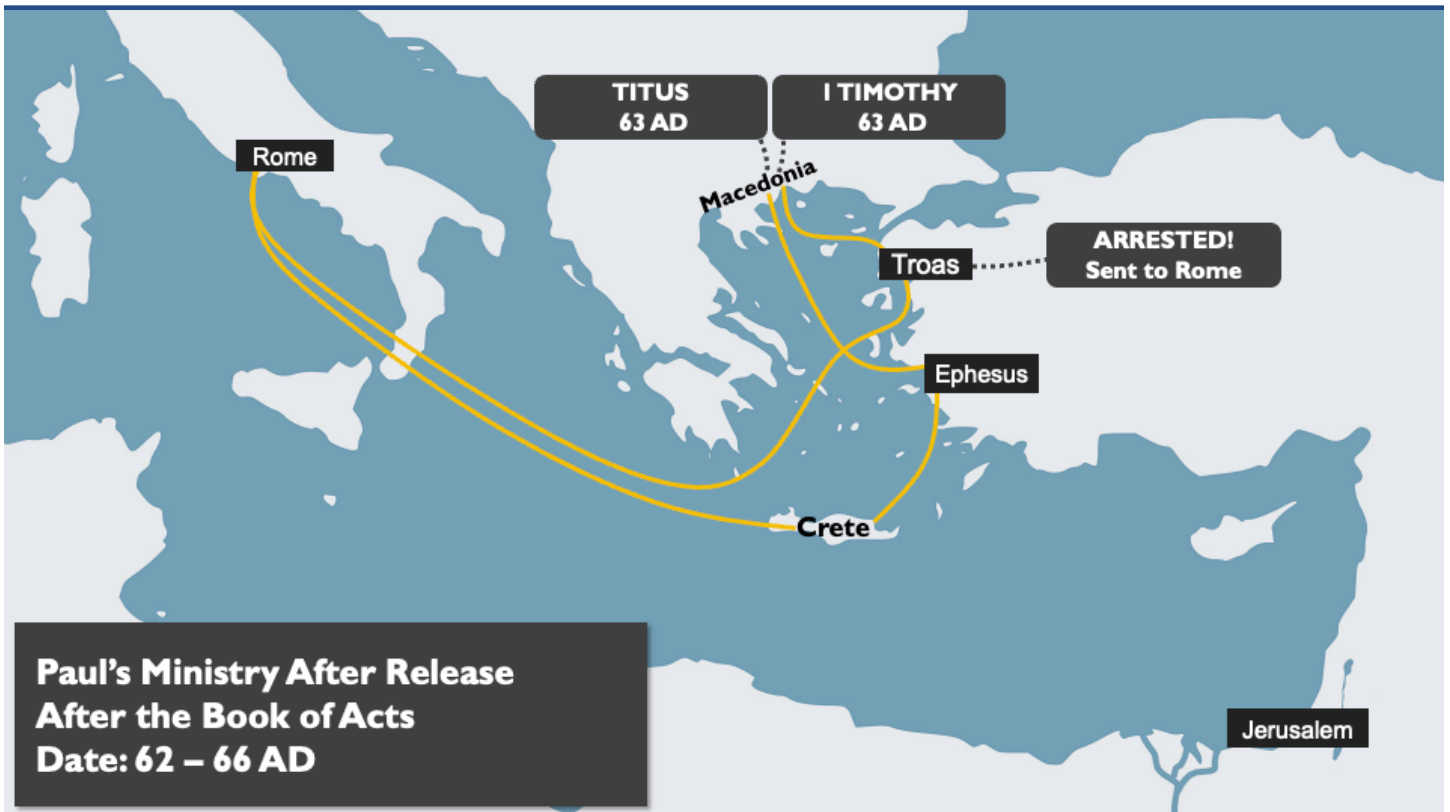
➔During Paul's second missionary journey, he writes _____.



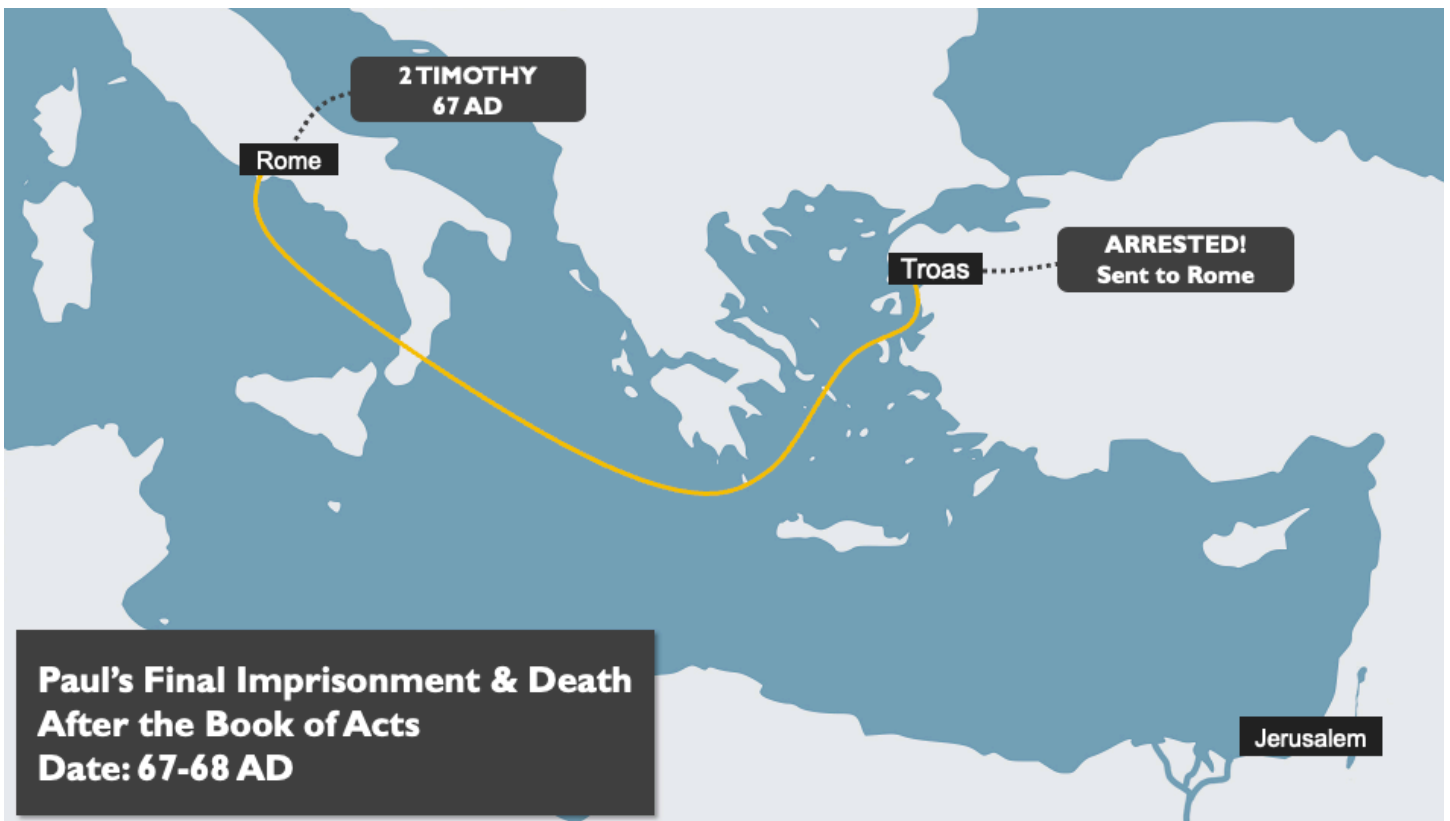
➔ During Paul's third missionary journey, he writes _____ and _____.



➔ During Paul's first imprisonment, he writes _____, _____, _____, and _____.



➔ During Paul's release from prison, he writes _____ and _____.



➔ During Paul's final imprisonment, he writes _____.

-
- The eight non-Pauline letters (Hebrews, James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude) were written by various authors to more general audiences, which is why they're often called the _____ Letters. These letters supplement Paul's teachings—they further explain the significance of what Jesus did and give us additional insight into what the Christian life should look like.

- **Key Takeaways**

- The New Testament letters were written on the _____ of ministry.
- The New Testament letters demonstrate the importance of _____ in the Christian life.
- Passion for God leads to a _____ determination to advance His Kingdom.



VIDEO DISCUSSION:

1. What stood out to you in this video?
2. How did learning the historical context of Paul's letters change your perspective? What did you learn?
3. Which of the "key takeaways" (from both the book of Acts and the Letters) stood out to you most? Why?
4. Read 2 Corinthians 11:24-28 and 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 as a group. What stands out to you? What motivated Paul to continue in the midst of severe persecution?
5. What is one thing you can change in your life in response to today's video?



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

- *Handbook on Acts and Paul's Letter* by Thomas Schreiner
- *Handbook on Hebrews through Revelation* by Andreas Kostenberger
- *Clarifying the Bible* by Mitch Maher

 **EQUIP #12: REVELATION** **DEVOTION DISCUSSION:**

How did God speak to you through His Word this past week? Share a HEAR Journal or a passage that stood out to you.

Watch Video #12 **INTRO TO REVELATION**

- The name of the the book comes from the first Greek word in the text (*apokalypsis*), meaning “revelation” or “_____.”
- Apocalyptic literature is a type of prophecy that uses _____ to describe future events—usually events associated with the end of the world.
- Revelation is rooted in the _____.
- Revelation was written by the Apostle _____ while he was exiled on the island of _____.
- Revelation is a _____ addressed to seven churches.
- Revelation is NOT intended to give us every _____ about the end times.
- Revelation is written to bring _____ to _____ believers.
- Basic Outline:
 - Revelation 1:19: “Therefore write what you have seen, **what is**, and **what will take place after this.**”

Revelation 1:1-8	Prologue
Revelation 1:9-3:22	“What is”
Revelation 4:1-22:5	“What will take place after this”
Revelation 22:6-21	Epilogue



KEY TRUTHS

- Jesus Christ will _____ to Earth to complete what He started.
- There will be a final _____ for ALL people.
 - _____: “Great White Throne” Judgment (Revelation 20:11-15)—will receive different degrees of punishment (Matthew 10:15; Luke 12:47-48).
 - _____: “Bema Seat” Judgment (2 Corinthians 5:10)—will receive different degrees of rewards (Matthew 25:14-30; 1 Corinthians 3:11-15).
- All people will live _____.
 - Nonbelievers will face eternal _____ (Revelation 20:11-15).
 - Believers will live in God’s presence in a new _____ and new _____ (Revelation 21-22).



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- God is still on His _____.
- God’s purposes _____ be accomplished.
- Eternal _____ fuels everyday _____.
 - “If you read history you will find that the Christians who did the most for the present world were precisely those who thought the most of the next...” -C.S. Lewis
 - “He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”
-Jim Elliot



VIDEO DISCUSSION:

1. What stood out to you in this video?
2. How does knowing that Revelation is a letter written to suffering believers change your perspective of the book?
3. What hope do you find in knowing that we will live on a “new earth” (Revelation 21:1)? What do you think eternity will be like?
4. Do you currently live with an eternal perspective? How can we cultivate this mindset?
5. In light of eternity, what do you need to change in your life right now?



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

- Recommended Commentaries:
 - **In-Depth Study:**
 - *Revelation* (Baker Exegetical Commentary Series) by Thomas Schreiner
 - *Revelation: The Spirit Speaks to the Churches* (Preaching the Word Series) by James Hamilton
 - *Exalting Jesus in Revelation* (Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary) by Daniel Akin
 - **Learning Different Views:** *Revelation: Four Views, A Parallel Commentary* by Steve Gregg
 - **Personal Devotions or Small Group Study:** *Revelation for You* by Tim Chester
- The *BibleProject* has animated summaries of the book of Revelation. Search “Bible Project Revelation” on YouTube.

EQUIP #13: THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

DEVOTION DISCUSSION:

How did God speak to you through His Word this past week? Share a HEAR Journal or a passage that stood out to you.

Watch Video #13

INTRO

- _____: What the whole Bible teaches us about a particular topic.
- A.W. Tozer: “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.”

THE TRINITY

1. God exists eternally as three distinct _____: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

- The Old Testament _____ reveals that God exists as more than one Person.
 - Psalm 45:6-7: “Your throne, God, is forever and ever... therefore God, your God, has anointed you...”
 - Exodus 3:2, 6: “Then the angel of the LORD appeared to him [Moses] in a flame of fire within a bush... Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God.”
- The three Persons of the Trinity are more _____ revealed in the New Testament.
 - Matthew 3:16-17: “When Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water. The heavens suddenly opened for him and he saw the Spirit of God

descending like a dove and coming down on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.'"

- The three Persons of the Trinity are _____ from each other and have _____ roles.
- The Father is NOT the Son or the Spirit and vice versa.
- 1 Peter 1:1-2: "To those chosen, living as exiles...chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient and to be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ."

2. Each Person of the Trinity is _____ God.

- Colossians 2:9: "For the entire fullness of God's nature dwells bodily in Christ."
- Acts 5: "Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?... You have not lied to people but to God."
- Whatever is true of God is true of all three Persons of the Trinity.

3. There is _____ God.

- Deuteronomy 6:4: "'Listen, Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one...'"
- Isaiah 45:5: "I am the LORD, and there is no other; there is no God but me."

FINAL THOUGHTS ON THE TRINITY:

- All analogies of the Trinity are _____.
- The Trinity shows God's _____ nature.
- The Trinity _____ Christianity from every other religion.



THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

- God is _____ (John 4:24).
- God is _____ (Psalm 90:2; 2 Peter 3:8).
- God is _____ (Hebrews 13:8).
- God is _____.
 - He is _____ (Matthew 19:26).
 - He is _____ (Psalm 147:5; Job 37:16).
 - He is _____ (Psalm 139:7).
- God is _____ (Isaiah 6:3), meaning “_____.”
- God is _____ (1 John 4:8).



APPLICATION

- Psalm 27:4: “One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.”
- _____ more like God starts with _____ more of God.
- **Look for _____ of _____ in God’s Word and His world!**
- Erik Thoennes: “The adventure of knowing God provides never-ending vistas of glory.”



VIDEO DISCUSSION:

1. What comes into your mind when you think about God? Did the video change your view of God in any way?
2. What stood out to you about the discussion of the Trinity? What questions do you still have?
3. Why is the Trinity such a significant doctrine? What other beliefs would be affected if someone were to deny the Trinity?
4. Which of the attributes of God do you find the most hope and comfort in? What other attributes could we add to this list?
5. What are some examples of “beams of glory” in God’s Word and/or God’s world that you have seen recently? What do they teach you about God?
6. How can you be more intentional about “gazing on the beauty of the LORD” (Psalm 27:4)?



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

- *The Attributes of God: A Journey into the Father’s Heart* by A.W. Tozer
- *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist* by John Piper
- *Knowing God* by J.I. Packer
- *The Knowledge of the Holy* by A.W. Tozer
- *None Greater: The Undomesticated Attributes of God* by Matthew Barrett
- **For more discussion about the Trinity, including related heresies and analogies, see the following section, “Diving Deeper: The Trinity.”**

KEY TRUTHS WE AFFIRM

1. God exists eternally as three distinct Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
2. Each Person is fully God.
3. There is one God.

DOCTRINAL ERRORS

Doctrinal errors regarding the Trinity result from denying any one of the key truths listed above. Here are the most common examples:

• **Modalism:**

- **Description:** Modalism is the idea that God is only one person who appears in three different “modes” or “forms.”
- **Response:** This view fails to acknowledge that the three persons of the Trinity are distinct individuals (Truth #1 above). It also denies the interpersonal relationships within the Trinity that appear frequently in Scripture (e.g., Matthew 3:16-17; Romans 8:26-27).

• **Arianism:**

- **Description:** The term “Arianism” comes from Arius, an elder of the church in Alexandria in the 3rd-4th centuries AD. He taught that God the Father created God the Son. Before that time, neither the Son nor the Spirit existed.
- **Response:** This view fails to see that each Person of the Trinity is fully God (Truth #2 above). Scripture upholds the full deity and eternal existence of both the Son (John 1:1-14) and the Spirit (Acts 5:3-4).

• **Tritheism:**

- **Description:** Tritheism holds that each Person of the Trinity is a separate God.
- **Response:** Scripture is clear that we serve one God (Truth #3 above), not three (Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Isaiah 45:5-6).

¹ This section is based on material from *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (2nd ed.) by Wayne Grudem and *Everyday Theology: What You Believe Matters* by Mary Wiley.

WHERE ANALOGIES FALL SHORT

All analogies of the Trinity are inadequate. Here are some of the most common examples:

1. A Clover

- **Description:** Just as one clover has three leaves, God is one God but three Persons.
- **Response:** Each leaf is only part of the clover; any one leaf can't be said to be the entire clover. However, each Person of the Trinity is fully God.

2. An Egg

- **Description:** One egg consists of a shell, egg white, and yolk.
- **Response:** Similar to the clover analogy (above), God is not made up of three "parts." Each Person of the Trinity is fully God, not one-third of God.

3. The Different Roles of a Person

- **Description:** One person might be a dad, brother, and uncle.
- **Response:** This describes one person fulfilling three roles. (See "Modalism" on the previous page.) God exists as three distinct Persons.

4. Water

- **Description:** Water exists in three forms: ice, liquid water, and water vapor.
- **Response:** Water is one element acting in three different ways in response to the conditions around it. The three Persons of the Trinity are eternally and fully present at all times, and they do not change their form based on external conditions.

Ultimately, our God is bigger than any analogy. As God says in Isaiah 55:8-9: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not my ways.' This is the LORD's declaration. 'For as heaven is higher than earth, so my ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.'"

EQUIP #14: THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

DEVOTION DISCUSSION:

How did God speak to you through His Word this past week? Share a HEAR Journal or a passage that stood out to you.

Watch Video #14

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH

- **Key Truth: We're made in the _____ of God.**
 - Genesis 1:26: "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness.'"
 - The image of God isn't based on what we _____ but who we _____. It's a status that we possess permanently, regardless of mental capacity, age, or condition.
 - The image of God means we are His _____ on Earth. We reflect His glory in a way that the rest of creation can't.
- How does sin affect the image of God?
 - All people are born with a sinful _____ (Ephesians 2:3).
 - Sin _____ but doesn't _____ the image of God in us. ALL people are still made in the image of God.

IMPLICATIONS

- We're made for God's _____ (Isaiah 43:7).
- All people have infinite _____ before God, regardless of their age, race, or mental capacity.

-
- Therefore, we should defend the life of every image-bearer, including the _____ (Psalm 139:13-14; Genesis 9:6).
 - Implications for men and women:
 - Genesis 1:27: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”
 - Both men and women are created in the image of God, so both have equal _____ before God.
 - There are only _____ genders, and your gender is NOT an _____!
 - God designed _____ to be between one man and one woman.
 - Genesis 2:24: “This is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.”
 - Scripture forbids _____ relationships, both in the Old Testament (Leviticus 18:22, 20:13) and in the New Testament (Romans 1:26-28; 1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Timothy 1:10). Why? A man and a woman coming together as one flesh (Genesis 2:24) are meant to reflect both the unity and diversity of the Persons of the Trinity.
 - Men and women have equal _____ but different _____.
 - We reflect the persons of the Trinity—all are fully God but have different roles.
 - Ephesians 5:22: “Wives submit to your husbands as to the Lord, because the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church.”
 - Husbands are to _____ their wives, and wives are to _____ to their husbands.
 - Submitting doesn’t imply inferiority in any way—the Son and Spirit submit to the Father, but ALL are fully God and equal in worth.
 - In Genesis 2:18, God calls the woman a “_____” (Hebrew: *‘ezer*). This word does NOT mean someone who is lesser. It refers to someone who

supplies strength in the area that is lacking in the one being helped. Husbands and wives complement each other!

- Male headship is NOT permission for men to be domineering or harsh; it's a command for men to love and lead _____, like Jesus (Ephesians 5:25).
- Mankind's ultimate mission has never _____.
 - Genesis 1:28: "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it."
 - Mankind's original mission was to _____ God's glory to the ends of the Earth. Before the Fall, that happened by populating the Earth with image-bearers.
 - Matthew 28:19: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations..."
 - Our mission is _____ to spread God's glory to the ends of the Earth. We now accomplish that primarily through "making disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19).



VIDEO DISCUSSION:

1. How did this video change your view of the image of God? What questions do you still have?
2. What distortions of this doctrine does our culture promote?
3. How should this doctrine impact the way we view and treat others? How does it impact the way we view issues like racism, sexism, or treatment of the unborn and elderly?
4. How would you explain the roles of men and women to someone who claims this idea is "outdated" or "oppressive"? What biblical evidence would you use to support your explanation?
5. What does it look like for us to intentionally image God and reflect His glory on a day-to-day basis (at home, in our marriage, at work etc.)? Give some practical ideas.



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

- *The Secular Creed: Engaging Five Contemporary Claims* by Rebecca McLaughlin
- *Re-enchanting Humanity: A Theology of Mankind* by Owen Strachan



EQUIP #15: THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION



DEVOTION DISCUSSION:

How did God speak to you through His Word this past week? Share a HEAR Journal or a passage that stood out to you.

Watch Video #15



WHY DO I NEED SALVATION?

- We're created to have a _____ with God.
- But all people are sinners _____ from God (Romans 3:23).



HOW AM I SAVED?

- 2 Corinthians 5:21: “[God] made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”
- Jesus died as our _____ (2 Corinthians 5:21). Our sins can now be transferred to Him, and His righteousness can be transferred to us.
- Mark 1:15: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near. **Repent** and **believe** the good news.”
- _____: confessing our sins and making a committed decision to turn away from sin and walk in obedience to God.
- _____: surrendering to Jesus and trusting in Him to save you. This is MORE than intellectual belief.
- We're saved when we _____ from sin and _____ in Jesus.



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I'M SAVED?

- _____: an instantaneous legal act where God exchanges our sin for Christ's righteousness and declares us guiltless in His sight.
 - Justification only happens through _____ alone in _____ alone.
 - John 14:6: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."
 - Galatians 2:16: "We know that a person is not justified by works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ..."
- _____: the life-long process of becoming more like Jesus.
 - Philippians 1:6: "I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."
 - Our sanctification begins the moment we're saved, and it continues until we die or when Christ returns.
 - Good works don't give us salvation; they're _____ of our salvation (James 2:17).



HOW DO I SHARE MY STORY OF SALVATION?

Your _____ is one of the most powerful tools God has given you for sharing the Gospel. Your life is evidence of God's life-changing power!

Three Parts of a Testimony:

1. _____ Christ: What was your life like before Christ?

"In fact, I myself was convinced that it was necessary to do many things in opposition to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. I actually did this in Jerusalem, and I locked up many of the saints in prison..." -Acts 26:9-10.

2. _____: How and when did you commit your life to Christ?

“I was traveling to Damascus...and I heard a voice speaking to me in Aramaic, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’... I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And the Lord replied, ‘I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting...I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and share among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’” -Acts 26:12-18, abridged

3. _____ Christ: How has your life changed since you’ve started following Christ?

“I preached to those in Damascus first, and to those in Jerusalem and in all the region of Judea, and to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works worthy of repentance.” -Acts 26:20

Practical Tips for Sharing Your Testimony:

- Remember that _____ is the hero of your story, not you.
- Use _____ language.
- Clearly communicate the _____. Someone should know how to be saved from listening to your testimony.
 - I **A**dmitted I was a sinner.
 - I **B**elieved Jesus died for my sins.
 - I **C**onfessed that He is Lord.
- DON'T say that you've “_____ had God in your life.”
- Keep it _____.
- _____ giving your testimony.



PRAYER OF SALVATION:

If you've never turned from your sin and trusted in Jesus, make today the day!

There are no “magical” words or prayers; salvation is about the posture of your heart. But here's a template that you can use to surrender yourself to Jesus:

Jesus,

I confess that I'm a sinner. (Spend time confessing any specific sins that come to mind.) I repent of my sins—I turn away from my own ways to follow You. I believe You died for my sins, and I put my trust in You as my Lord and Savior. Help me to grow closer to You every day of my life.

Amen.

If you genuinely prayed that prayer, let us know! Scan the QR code to the right to fill out a form. We would love to celebrate with you and help you figure out your next steps!



VIDEO DISCUSSION:

Now that you've learned how to give a testimony, it's time to put it into practice! Share a brief (less than five minutes) version of your testimony with each other. Note: If you're going through this material with a larger group, you may need to split into groups of 3-4.

Be sure to include the three parts of a testimony as you share.



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

See the following page for a “Salvation FAQs” section.



IS BAPTISM NECESSARY FOR SALVATION?

Scripture is clear that no external act is necessary for salvation. Romans 10:9-10 says, “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified...” If baptism were necessary for salvation, it would need to be added to this passage. Instead, Scripture says that salvation is an internal matter of the heart. We’re saved by faith alone, not by any external acts of obedience (Galatians 2:16).

However, baptism is commanded for all disciples of Jesus (Matthew 28:19). It’s an important step of obedience all Christians should take as a public declaration of their new life in Christ (Romans 6:4). In other words, it’s a necessary step of obedience *after* salvation, not a requirement *for* salvation.

HAVE I COMMITTED THE “UNFORGIVABLE” SIN?

In Mark 3:28-29, Jesus says, “Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin...” He said this in response to the Jewish scribes, who were “saying” that “‘by the prince of demons [Jesus] casts out the demons’” (v. 22). The Greek term for what the Jewish scribes were “saying” describes an ongoing action. In other words, they were *persistently* attributing the works of Jesus to Satan.

Therefore, the “unforgivable” sin does NOT describe a few wayward words or an accidental slip of the tongue. For example, Peter verbally rejects Jesus three times but is later forgiven and restored. Instead, it describes a willful, ongoing rejection of the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives. If someone continually rejects the Holy Spirit, the saving work of Christ will not be applied to their life, and they won’t be saved.

Christians often worry that they’ve committed this sin, but such a concern is evidence of an openness to the convicting work of the Holy Spirit. If you’re worried that you’ve committed this sin, you haven’t committed it. This sin only applies to a heart that never seeks forgiveness in the first place.

CAN I LOSE MY SALVATION?

First, we must clarify that reciting a prayer, walking down an aisle, or being raised in a Christian home don't *necessarily* mean somebody is a true Christian (if not accompanied by heart change). A true believer is someone who has turned from their sin and trusted in Jesus and is therefore indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

In this context, no, a true Christian can't lose his/her salvation. Talking about His followers, Jesus declares that "no one will snatch them out of my hand" (John 10:28). Additionally, Ephesians 1:13-14 says, "When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit *guaranteeing* our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession..." In other words, the Spirit's presence in our lives is a *guarantee* of our eternal inheritance.

There are a few passages (e.g., Hebrews 6:4-6) that seem to suggest the possibility of falling away from Christ. However, these passages likely address those who have been exposed to the truth and participated in Christian fellowship but never truly put their faith in Christ (see 1 John 2:19).

When we look at Scripture as a whole, there is no evidence that someone who is truly born again (John 3:3), adopted into God's family (Ephesians 1:4), and sealed with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13) can have these statuses revoked. Instead, those who are justified will also be glorified (Romans 8:29-30).

WHY DO CHRISTIANS NEED TO KEEP ASKING FOR FORGIVENESS?

If we're justified and considered righteous at the moment of salvation, why do Christians continue to ask for forgiveness after they're saved?

Our sin doesn't revoke our salvation. (See the question above for a discussion on the assurance of our salvation.) However, our sin continues to displease God, even after we're saved. It's possible for us to "quench the Holy Spirit" (1 Thessalonians 5:19), meaning we hinder His work in our lives. So while our sin doesn't *break* our relationship with God, it can hinder our intimacy with Him and limit His power in our lives. Therefore, as Christians, we ask for forgiveness—not to preserve our salvation, but to maintain our intimacy with God.

WHAT ABOUT PREDESTINATION?

Scripture says that God “predestines” or “elects” some people to salvation (Romans 8:29; Ephesians 1:5, 11). However, there are different interpretations regarding the meaning of predestination. Some people hold to “unconditional election,” meaning God’s choice doesn’t depend on any condition met by humans—He chooses to save some people by His grace. Others hold to “conditional election,” meaning God’s election is dependent on God’s foreknowledge of who will believe in Christ.

Christians have debated this topic for centuries with no clear resolution. Here’s what we can say: (1) Scripture is clear that God is ultimately in control over all things (Romans 8:28; Ephesians 1:4-11) and (2) Scripture is also clear that people make real choices that they are responsible for (John 3:16; 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9).

Our conviction is that much of the confusion regarding this topic results from finite people trying to understand an infinite God who is outside of time. Ultimately, we believe God is so sovereign that He is able to give people free will and still accomplish His perfect will. How this works is ultimately a mystery, but we uphold BOTH the sovereignty of God and the free will of man. Any attempt to use Biblical predestination to promote fatalism (i.e. “Nothing I do matters because it’s already been determined”) is a misapplication of Scripture.

God is in control. But we also make real choices that matter. Both can be true.

WHAT ABOUT BABIES AND THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED?

Scripture doesn’t provide us with a direct answer to the question of what happens to those who are unable to respond to the Gospel. However, in John 9, after Jesus heals a blind man, He says, “For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind” (verse 39). The Pharisees respond, “What? Are we blind too?” (Verse 40). Jesus says, “If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains” (verse 41). The principle here is that if someone is truly unable to see and respond to truth, they will not be held responsible.

Therefore, our conviction is that those who are *unable* to respond to the Gospel (babies, the mentally handicapped, etc.) will be under God’s grace. One Biblical account that seems to support this is 2 Samuel 12:23, when David implies that he will see his infant son again after his son passes away.

WHAT ABOUT THOSE WHO HAVE NEVER HEARD THE GOSPEL?

Scripture says that all people have enough knowledge of God to be held responsible: “For since the creation of the world, God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse” (Romans 1:20). All people have also subsequently rebelled against God (Romans 1:21-23). Therefore, everyone who dies apart from putting their faith in Christ will face eternal judgment.

However, Scripture also highlights God’s mercy toward those who actively seek Him. For example, Acts 10 recounts the story of Cornelius—a Roman centurion—who initially is not a Christian. But he genuinely prays to God (verse 2), and an angel appears to him (verse 3). The angel arranges a meeting between the Apostle Peter and Cornelius (verses 4-8). Peter preaches the Gospel to Cornelius and his household, and all who hear the message are saved and baptized (verses 44-48).

Another passage to consider is Acts 17:26-27, which says that God determined people’s “appointed times in history and the boundaries of their land. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out and find him, though he is not far from any one of us.” In other words, nobody’s geographic location or circumstances are an accident—God is accessible to all. Therefore, our conviction is that if someone *genuinely* seeks the truth, God can provide a way for him/her to be saved—whether through dreams, visions, missionaries, or other means.

Nevertheless, we should also understand that Jesus has commissioned us as His followers to take the Gospel to “all nations” (Matthew 28:19). We have a responsibility to be obedient to Christ’s call. Knowing that there are still many people who have never heard about Jesus should spur us on to urgent action, not to speculate about their eternal fate. In the words of Pastor David Platt, “Every saved person this side of heaven owes the Gospel to every lost person this side of hell.”¹

¹ *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream* by David Platt

EQUIP #16: THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

DEVOTION DISCUSSION:

How did God speak to you through His Word this past week? Share a HEAR Journal or a passage that stood out to you.

Watch Video #16

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

- “Church” is a translation of the Greek word *ekklesia*, which means “_____” or “assembly.”
- The church is NOT a _____; it’s a _____.
- The _____ Church: all true believers for all of time.
- A _____ Church: a community of Christ-followers who gather under the leadership of elders and are committed to the faithful preaching of God’s Word, the proper practice of the ordinances, and the fulfillment of the Great Commission.
 - **“A community of Christ-followers who gather...”**
 - There are over _____ “one another” commands in the New Testament (e.g., John 13:34). You can’t live out these commands by yourself!
 - Hebrews 10:24-25: “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, *not giving up meeting together*, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another...”
 - Being part of a local church is never considered _____ in the New Testament. How can we claim to follow Jesus and neglect the church He died for (Ephesians 5:25-27)?

- **“...under the leadership of elders...”**

- The pattern in all New Testament churches was to have _____ (plural) as the main governing authority of each local body (Acts 14:23).
- The terms elder, overseer, shepherd (or pastor), and bishop all refer to the _____ office in the New Testament.

- **“...and are committed to the faithful preaching of God’s Word...”**

- 2 Timothy 4:2-3: *“Preach the word... For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, will multiply teachers for themselves because they have an itch to hear what they want to hear.”*
- Any church that doesn’t preach and uphold the inspired, inerrant, and authoritative Word of God is a _____ church.

- **“...the proper practice of the ordinances...”**

- An ordinance is a practice established by Jesus for His followers to observe.
- There are two ordinances: baptism and communion.
- Baptism is a _____ of our salvation. It represents being buried with Christ, cleansed from our sins, and raised to new life with Christ (Romans 6:4).
 - The symbolism of salvation—being buried and raised to new life—is best represented by full immersion under water. “Baptism” comes from a Greek word (*baptizo*) that means “to immerse.”
 - Since baptism represents salvation, we believe it should only be done by those who are able to turn from sin and trust in Jesus (see Acts 10:47).
 - Baptism is only observed _____ by each believer.
- Communion is an _____ reminder of Jesus’ sacrifice for us (1 Corinthians 11:23-39) AND a foreshadowing of our future fellowship with Him (Matthew 26:29; Revelation 19:9).



WHO IS THE ENEMY OF THE CHURCH?

- Ephesians 6:12: “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”
- _____: evil spiritual beings who actively oppose the work of God.
- _____: the “adversary” and leader of demons (Matthew 12:24).
- Jesus has won the _____, but there are ongoing _____ for people’s souls.



WHAT IS THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH?

- **“...and the fulfillment of the Great Commission.”**
 - Matthew 28:19: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations...”
 - Matthew 24:14: “This good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed in all the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” *[Note: Satan’s goal is to delay this.]*
 - The success of the church is determined by if we _____ . This is our main form of spiritual warfare.
 - The local church is God’s “plan A” for fulfilling the Great Commission, and there is no “plan B.” We get to be part of bringing Jesus back!



VIDEO DISCUSSION:

1. Do you agree that we live in an individualistic culture? In what ways do you think this has made the mission of the church more difficult?
2. What stood out to you about the definition of a local church? Was there anything that challenged your previous understanding of the church?
3. How would you respond to someone who says that being part of a church is “optional”?

-
4. Do you think someone could experience all the benefits of church by watching online? Why or why not? What might they be missing out on?
 5. How do you think the American church as a whole is doing at fulfilling the Great Commission? In what ways is Satan distracting us from our mission? What needs to change?



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

If you're a follower of Jesus, and you've never been baptized, we would love to walk you through the process! Scan the QR code (right) to get more info and fill out a form to be baptized.

See the following page for a section on "Church Membership."





WHY SHOULD I BECOME A MEMBER OF A LOCAL CHURCH?

Now that we've established the importance of participating in a local church, what's the significance of becoming an official "member" of a church? There aren't any verses in Scripture commanding us to have our name on a membership list, so what's the point?

Let's look at a command from Hebrews 13:17: *"Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account."*

This verse raises an important question for both church leaders and church participants. Church leaders must answer, "Who are the people I will be held accountable for?" And church participants must answer, "Which church leaders will I submit to?"

In the early church, it was usually clear who belonged to which church. Communities were often smaller, there were fewer church options, and persecution weeded out people who weren't fully committed.

But in today's world, our context is much different. Many communities have a church on every corner. People "church hop" around depending on their preferences or only attend church for special occasions (like Christmas and Easter). And, in our post-COVID world, many people watch church online.

Given our culture today, obeying Hebrews 13:17 becomes more complicated. Who are the people the leaders of BAC are responsible for? Is it every person who has ever attended BAC? Is it people who attend a certain number of times a year? Does it include people who watch online?

And for church participants, who are the leaders they're supposed to submit to? If someone attends a new church every few weeks, do they submit to whichever leaders they feel like?

That's where church membership comes in.

For us, church membership is making a commitment to a specific local church and its leadership. It's saying, "I'm submitting to the leaders of this church, and I'm willing to be held accountable."

Think of it like dating versus marriage. Many people today want to "date" the church without making any long-term commitments or taking on responsibilities.

But church membership is more like marriage. You're making a commitment to a specific church, and you're taking ownership. You accept that you have a role to play in the church, and you're willing to step up and do your part.

So even though the New Testament doesn't directly mention church membership, we can't live out commands such as Hebrews 13:17 without commitment to a specific local church. That's why we believe membership is essential for faithful participation in a church community.

HOW DO I BECOME A MEMBER AT BAC?

Membership at BAC is a two-step process:

1. **Take our Discover BAC Class.** This class is led by a staff member and will help you learn more about who we are as a church—our leadership, mission, and values. It will also help you learn how you can get more involved. Scan the QR code (right) to sign up for a session!
2. **Fill out our membership application online.** Once you've completed Discover BAC, scan the QR code (right) to access our membership application. You'll need to log in to your BAC account (or create one) to fill out the form. As part of the application, you'll share a brief version of your testimony and agree to our membership commitments.

Once you've submitted an application, our Elders will review it, and we will contact you with their decision. We look forward to welcoming you into our church family!



 **EQUIP #17: THE GREAT COMMISSION** **DEVOTION DISCUSSION:**

How did God speak to you through His Word this past week? Share a HEAR Journal or a passage that stood out to you.

Watch Video #17 **THE GREAT COMMISSION**

18 "Jesus came near and said to them, 'All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go, therefore, and 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 everything I have commanded you. 20 And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'"

-Matthew 28:18-20

- Verse 19 (above) has four commands, but the main command is _____.
- _____: a committed follower of Jesus. The term means "learner" or "apprentice," so it describes somebody who is *actively* following Jesus.
- How do we make disciples? By going, baptizing, and teaching.
 - "Go" implies _____.
 - "Baptizing" represents _____ someone to follow Christ.
 - "Teaching" represents _____ in someone to become a mature disciple of Christ.
- Disciple making means intentionally _____ AND _____.
 - "Inviting" is also called _____.
 - "Investing" is also called _____.
 - We need BOTH! Imagine them like two oars in a rowboat.

- Who does this command apply to? Does it just apply to the original disciples (aka the Apostles)?
 - Verse 19: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of **all nations...**”
 - “Nations” doesn’t mean political nations; it means _____.
 - Revelation 5:9: “And you purchased people for God by your blood from every tribe and language and people and nation.”
 - Current estimates¹:
 - There are about _____ people groups in the world today.
 - About _____ of these people groups are considered “unreached.”
 - The total population in these unreached people groups is about _____ billion people, which is about 43% of the world’s population.
 - The Apostles did NOT “make disciples of ALL nations.” The work continues today.
 - Verse 20: “And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
 - “Always” means “all the days.”
 - Did the Apostles make disciples “all the days” until the “end of the age?” NO!
 - **The Great Commission is a command that applies to _____ believers!**

Year	“Super” Pastor	Disciple-Maker
1	10 people/day x 365 days = 3,650 people saved	Disciple-maker + 3 disciples = 4 disciples
2	7,300	16
3	10,950	64
16	_____	_____

¹ joshuaproject.net

-
- What is our motivation for fulfilling the Great Commission?
 - A low-grade sense of _____ will never sustain us in completing the Great Commission; only an all-consuming _____ for God will.
 - John Stott: “The highest of all missionary motives is neither obedience to the Great Commission (important as that is), not love for sinners who are alienated and perishing (strong as that incentive is), but rather passionate zeal for the glory of Jesus Christ...”
 - What if I don’t feel ready to live out the Great Commission?
 - Verse 20: “And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
 - We CAN’T do this on our own, but we don’t have to—Jesus is with us “all the days.”
 - Closing Thought: “The question is no longer if you are called to leverage your life for the Great Commission, only where and how. However God gifted you, He gifted you with the Great Commission in mind.” –J.D. Greear



VIDEO DISCUSSION:

1. What was your understanding of the Great Commission before today? How did the video change that?
2. As you reflect on making disciples, can you think of someone who played a significant role in your spiritual journey? How did they help you?
3. Disciple making involves both inviting AND investing. Which of these do you find more challenging/intimidating? Why?
4. Our motivation for fulfilling the Great Commission should stem from our love for God, not guilt. How can we cultivate a deeper love for God that overflows into disciple-making?
5. What would it look like for Bedford Alliance Church to become a Great Commission-centered church?
6. Reflecting back on J.D. Greear’s quote, how might God be calling you to leverage your unique abilities and passions for the Great Commission?

For further study, see *40 Questions About the Great Commission* by Daniel Akin, Benjamin Merkle, and George Robinson.

 **EQUIP #18: INTRO TO CALLING** **DEVOTION DISCUSSION:**

How did God speak to you through His Word this past week? Share a HEAR Journal or a passage that stood out to you.

Watch Video #18 **BAC MISSION STATEMENT:**

*Everyday people living out our **God-given calling** as we invest in others to do the same.*

 **INTRO TO CALLING**

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.” -Ephesians 2:10

- We're not just saved _____ something; we're saved _____ something.
- _____ calling: God's will for ALL believers.
 - “For we are *his* workmanship...” —we're created to reflect God!
 - We're ALL called to _____ God and make _____.
- _____ calling: your unique role in God's Kingdom.
 - “Workmanship” is the Greek word *poiema*, which is where we get our word “poem” from. In the ancient world, *poiema* referred to a work of art or craftsmanship, including things like poems, plays, songs, pottery, or jewelry.
 - “Ahead of time” refers to “before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4). Before you were ever born or the world was made, God had specific good works in mind for you!
 - You're _____ to make a _____ difference.

-
- Personal calling is the _____ way you live out general calling—through your God-given abilities, passions, and circle of impact.
 - 1 Corinthians 12:14–18: “Indeed the body [the church] is not one part but many. If the foot should say, ‘Because I’m not a hand, I don’t belong to the body,’ it is not for that reason any less a part of the body... If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God has arranged each one of the parts in the body just as he wanted.”
 - Examples of God-given calling from Scripture:
 - Paul took the Gospel where it had never gone (Romans 15:20).
 - Aquila and Priscilla used their passion for hospitality and the blessing of having a home to foster Kingdom growth (Acts 18:2-3).
 - Luke used his education and intelligence to research and write the two longest books in the New Testament (Luke 1:3).
 - J.D. Greear: “The question is no longer *if* you are called to leverage your life for the Great Commission, only *where* and *how*. However God gifted you, He gifted you with the Great Commission in mind.”
 - The question is no longer “*if*” because the Great Commission is *general* calling.
 - The question now is only “*where* and *how*”—this is where *personal* calling comes in.



VIDEO DISCUSSION:

1. How did this lesson change your view of calling? What questions do you still have?
 2. What stood out to you most about Ephesians 2:10?
 3. How did the stories of Paul, Aquila and Priscilla, and Luke help you in your understanding of personal calling?
 4. Can you identify a unique ability and/or passion that God has given you? How do you think it could be used for His Kingdom?
 5. To the best of your ability (we’ll cover this more in the sessions ahead), how would you currently describe your personal calling?
-

EQUIP #19: MY GOD-GIVEN ABILITIES

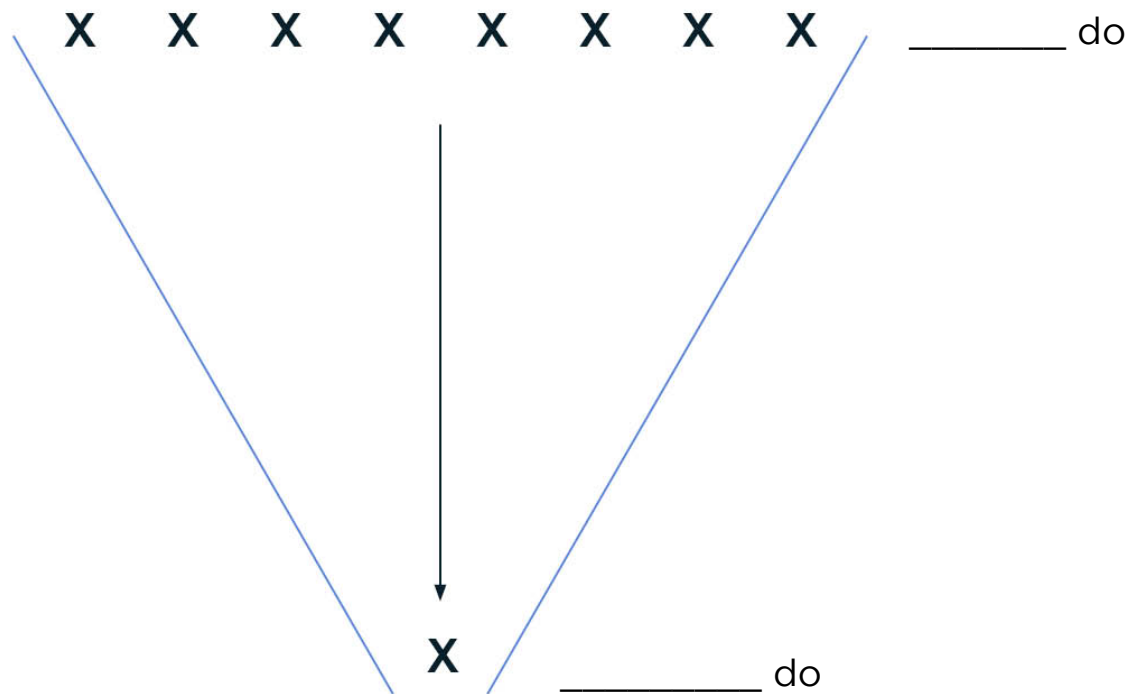
DEVOTION DISCUSSION:

How did God speak to you through His Word this past week? Share a HEAR Journal or a passage that stood out to you.

Watch Video #19

WHERE WE'RE GOING

THE FUNNEL STORY:



“There are many things in life you ‘can do’ for God. And the more success you have, the more opportunities will come. But most opportunities are distractions in disguise. My greatest fear for you is not failure with your life work but success at the wrong thing. Therefore, find the one thing you ‘must do’ for God.”

-Professor Howard Hendricks

MY TWO WORDS¹:

Your “two words” are a simple and memorable way of naming your personal calling.

Your two words complete the following thought:

I exist to glorify God and make disciples by

_____ ing _____.
[Abilities] [Passions]

EXAMPLE TWO WORDS:

- Andrea: Cultivating Eden
- Bob: Razing Hell
- Daniel: Amplifying Atmospheres
- Jen: Creating Sunshine
- Lindsay: Refining Diamonds
- Luke: Unearthing Wonders
- Mike: Inspiring Innovation
- Rebecca: Illuminating Shadows
- Ryan: Building Bedrock
- Stephanie: Mining Potential



GOD-GIVEN ABILITIES

- Exodus 31:1-6: “The LORD spoke to Moses: ‘Look, I have appointed by name Bezalel son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. I have filled him with God’s Spirit, with wisdom, understanding, and ability in every craft... I have also selected Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, to be with him. I have put wisdom in the heart of every skilled artisan in order to make all that I have commanded you...’”
 - God chose individuals for _____ tasks.
 - God _____ the people He chose with specific abilities.
 - We tend to focus on _____ gifts (e.g., Moses and Aaron), but _____ of God’s people are equipped to make a difference.

¹ For more information about the concept of your “two words,” see *Younique: Designing the Life that God Dreamed for You* by Will Mancini.

• 1 Corinthians 12:4-11: “Now there are different gifts, but the same Spirit... A manifestation of the Spirit is given to each person for the common good: to one is given a message of wisdom through the Spirit, to another, a message of knowledge by the same Spirit, to another, faith by the same Spirit... One and the same Spirit is active in all these, distributing to each person as he wills.”

- Every believer in Christ has one or more _____ gift(s)—any ability given by the Holy Spirit to build up the church.
- Natural _____ are inherited at birth; _____ gifts are received when we’re born again (i.e. at salvation). Ultimately, both types of gifts are from God and can be used by Him for His purposes.
- Every believer is uniquely _____ for Kingdom impact.

 **EXERCISES**

ABILITIES 360

Text up to 5 people who know you best (family, friends, co-workers, etc.). These should be people you would go to for advice. Here’s a sample text:

I’m participating in a process to discover my personal calling, and I’m seeking input from others. What three words would you use to describe my top abilities in life? What would you say I do best? Please respond with three words only. Thanks!

Record their responses below:

First Name	Ability #1	Ability #2	Ability #3

HIGH 5 STRENGTHS ASSESSMENT

Scan the QR code (right) with your smart phone OR go to *high5test.com*. Click “Take the strengths test” and use your email to create an account.

This is a free test that will help identify your top 5 strengths. As you take the assessment, don’t over-think your responses—go with your gut. It should only take about 15 minutes.



Once you’ve completed the test, record your top 5 strengths (in order) below.

My Top 5 Strengths:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Note: See the section “High 5 Strengths Descriptions” on page 85 for more information about your strengths.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS ASSESSMENT

Scan the QR code (right) with your smart phone OR go to *my.bedfordalliance.church*. Log in or create an account with your email.

Once you’ve logged in, scroll down and look for “Assessments” under “Quick Links.” Find “Spiritual Gifts” and click “Take Assessment.” The test will take about 10-15 minutes.



Once you’ve completed the test, record your top 5 gifts (in order) below.

My Top 5 Gifts:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

NAMING YOUR ABILITIES

As you reflect on your results above, summarize your top abilities using **one word (an action word ending in “-ing”)**. This will help you form the first word of your “two words.” Use the questions/prompts below to help you brainstorm a word.

1. What abilities/words were repeated in the exercises above?
2. Is there a single word that captures several of your top abilities?
3. Review the list of example words below and choose one word to summarize your abilities. Your word does NOT have to come from this list; use it as a starting point.

- Analyzing
- Building
- Coaching
- Collaborating
- Communicating
- Connecting
- Creating
- Cultivating
- Designing
- Developing
- Discovering
- Empowering
- Encouraging
- Engaging
- Equipping
- Facilitating
- Guiding
- Healing
- Innovating
- Inspiring
- Investing
- Leading
- Mentoring
- Motivating
- Networking
- Nurturing
- Optimizing
- Organizing
- Protecting
- Revealing
- Resolving
- Serving
- Strengthening
- Supporting
- Teaching
- Transforming



ONE WORD TO SUMMARIZE MY GOD-GIVEN ABILITIES:

SAMPLE EXERCISES

First Name	Ability #1	Ability #2	Ability #3
Alison	Writing	Speaking	Follow-through
Lindsay	Writing	Teaching	Researching
Stephanie	Analyzing	Teaching	Learning
Mike	Researching	Preaching	Speaking
Rebecca	Teaching	Communicating	Investing

My Top 5 Strengths:

1. Thinker
2. Analyst
3. Strategist
4. Philomath (Learner)
5. Problem Solver

My Top 5 Gifts:

1. Knowledge
2. Teaching
3. Wisdom
4. Discipling
5. Service



ONE WORD TO SUMMARIZE MY GOD-GIVEN ABILITIES:

Unearthing



VIDEO DISCUSSION:

1. What stood out to you in this video?
2. What do you think are your top abilities? What are some abilities that others have seen in you?
3. Make a first attempt at summarizing your top abilities using one word.
4. Make a first attempt at naming your “two words.”
5. Given your current knowledge, what do you think your unique contribution to the Great Commission could be? (We’ll discuss this more in the sessions ahead; just give your best answer for now.)



HOMEWORK

Finish the exercises above: (1) Abilities 360, (2) High 5 Strength Test, (3) Spiritual Gifts Assessment, and (4) Naming Your Abilities.

Remember your goal is to summarize your abilities with one word (an action word ending in “-ing”). Be prepared to discuss your one word at the start of the next session.



“HIGH 5” STRENGTHS DESCRIPTIONS

1. Analyst

Analysts are energized by looking for simplicity and clarity through large amounts of data. Analysts are frustrated when someone asks them to follow their heart rather than logic and proven facts.

2. Believer

Actions of Believers are driven by core values that cannot be compromised at the expense of success. Believers are drained if their beliefs and values are questioned or misaligned with what they have to do.

3. Brainstormer

Brainstormers are excited when asked to come up with new ideas and to connect the seemingly un-connectable. Brainstormers are bored by standard practices or closed-minded people.

4. Catalyst

Catalysts enjoy getting things started and creating momentum in a stagnant environment. Catalysts cannot stand waiting and wasting time when they could be getting things off the ground.

5. Chameleon

Chameleons draw excitement from constantly changing environments, surprises, unexpected detours, and working “on the fly”. They are bored by predictability and routine.

6. Coach

Coaches enjoy discovering the potential in other people and supporting their personal growth. They find it hard to accept when this potential is wasted.

7. Commander

Commanders love to be in charge, speak up, and be asked for a direct opinion. They do not avoid conflicts and cannot understand a “beating around the bush” mentality.

8. Deliverer

Deliverers follow through on their commitments, and they enjoy seeing how it builds trust and respect among others. They feel horrible if promises get broken—both on the receiving and on the giving side.

9. Empathizer

Empathizers are great at noticing how others feel and using this understanding to do something good. They are frustrated when asked to disregard feelings and emotions and follow strict logic instead.

10. Focus Expert

Focus Experts enjoy getting one project to the finish line rather than changing course regularly. They cannot stand distractions that interrupt them from focusing on one thing at a time.

11. Optimist

Optimists enjoy giving praise and being grateful for what they have. They find it hard to be around people who constantly pick out what's wrong in everything.

12. Peace Keeper

Peace Keepers are masters of balance, finding alignment and building bridges among people to get the best outcome. They feel emotionally drained by constant friction among people.

13. Philomath

Philomaths are in love with learning—exploring many interests, following new paths, and learning as much as possible. They do not enjoy the company of “know-it-all” people or people who are closed minded.

14. Problem Solver

Problem Solvers love finding bugs, uncovering flaws, diagnosing problems, and finding solutions. They find it hard to sweep problems under the rug without addressing the issue.

15. Self-Believer

Self-Believers are independent and self-sufficient people, inspiring others with their certainty and confidence. They cannot stand when others tell them what to do or try to control their actions.

16. Storyteller

Storytellers are masters of communication. They like to host and speak in public. They are drained in situations that do not allow them to express themselves through words.

17. Strategist

Strategists have the skill to see the big picture, which enables them to find the best route through the clutter. Because connecting the dots comes so naturally for them, they get impatient with people who make slow decisions.

18. Thinker

Thinkers enjoy mental activity, intellectual discussions, and spending time alone thinking. They find it hard to work in teams where acting before thinking is the norm.

19. Time Keeper

Nothing excites Time Keepers more than meeting the deadline. They enjoy setting up processes, timelines, and plans. Time Keepers get confused in chaos where neither outcomes nor ways to achieve them are clear.

20. Winner

Winners can turn any mundane task into a game or challenge because the feeling of competition is essential for them. They feel lost in environments with no defined measure of success.



EQUIP #20: MY GOD-GIVEN PASSIONS



OPENING DISCUSSION:

Share the one word that you chose to summarize your God-given abilities (see Equip #19). How does this word reflect the unique way God has gifted you?

Watch Video #20



GOD-GIVEN PASSIONS

- “Passion” comes from the Latin word *passio*, meaning “_____.” Over time, the meaning expanded to include any strong emotion.
- Passion is _____ that _____ the test of pain.
- Romans 15:19-24: “I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum. My aim is to preach the gospel where Christ has not been named, so that I will not build on someone else’s foundation... That is why I have been prevented many times from coming to you. But now I no longer have any work to do in these regions, and I have strongly desired for many years to come to you...”
- Luke 9:51: “When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.”
- Both Paul and Jesus were so burdened by passion for their God-given mission that they had to say _____ to many “good” opportunities to focus on what was “best.”
- Passion helps _____ our abilities.


EXERCISES
PASSIONS 360

Text up to 5 people who know you best (family, friends, co-workers, etc.). These should be people you would go to for advice. Here's a sample text:

I'm participating in a process to discover my personal calling, and I'm seeking input from others. What three words would you use to describe what I'm most passionate about in life? Please respond with three words only. Thanks!

Record their responses below:

First Name	Passion #1	Passion #2	Passion #3

PASSIONS 360 EXAMPLE

First Name	Passion #1	Passion #2	Passion #3
Alison	Outdoors	Music	Fitness
Lindsay	Knowledge	Learning	Outdoors
Mike	God	Knowledge	Nature
Daniel	Excellence	Discipleship	Rocks/Outdoors
Andrea	Knowledge	Creation	Connections

OFFENDER OPPOSITES

Our passions are often closely tied to our pain. One way to identify our passions is to consider the things that offend us. Use the steps below to help you do that.

1. Using the chart below, list several things that offend you. These can range from significant issues like human trafficking to something as small as not saying “please.”
2. For each offense, reflect on the deeper meaning behind it—*why* does this offend you?
3. Then, identify the *opposite* of what offends you. This will provide a clue to what you’re passionate about. Look for any patterns in your answers.

Offender	Why does this offend you?	Opposite (Passion)

OFFENDER OPPOSITES EXAMPLE

Offender	Why does this offend you?	Opposite
Lack of passion toward God	Failure to recognize who God is (<u>apathy</u>)	Awe/wonder of God
Being unprepared	Lack of effort (<u>apathy</u>)	Being prepared (<u>showing passion</u>)
Accepting the status quo	Unwilling to change or work hard (<u>apathy</u>)	Seeking improvement (<u>showing passion</u>)
Being late	Lack of caring/preparation (<u>apathy</u>)	Being punctual (<u>showing passion</u>)

PASSION FUNNEL

We often confuse 'interests' with 'passions.' Use the funnel below to help you distinguish between things you enjoy and your deepest convictions. See the next page for an example.



INTERESTED IN (5-6):

What do you enjoy? What are your hobbies? How do you spend your free time?

EXCITED ABOUT (4-5):

What gives you energy? What do you look forward to doing?

Driven By (3-4):

What **MUST** you do? Where do you feel most alive?
What gets you out of bed?

Burdened By (1-2):

What keeps you up at night? What pain/brokenness in the world do you think God wants you to help restore?

PASSION FUNNEL EXAMPLE

INTERESTED IN (5-6):

What do you enjoy? What are your hobbies? How do you spend your free time?

Reading, banjo/guitar, hunting, geology, sports/exercising

EXCITED ABOUT (4-5):

What gives you energy? What do you look forward to doing?

Time in nature, learning, time with family, vacation

Driven By (3-4):

What MUST you do? Where do you feel most alive?
What gets you out of bed?

Providing for my family, investing in others, worship

Burdened By (1-2):

What keeps you up at night? What pain/brokenness
in the world do you think God wants you to help restore?

Apathy toward God

NAMING YOUR PASSIONS

As you reflect on your results above, summarize your deepest passions using **one word**. This word should be **a noun (person, place, or thing)** that describes the ultimate focus of your abilities. This will help you form the second word of your “two words.” Use the questions/prompts below to help you brainstorm a word.

1. What passions or ideas were repeated in the exercises above?
2. Is there a single word that captures several of your top passions? What is the passion *behind* your passions?
3. Review the list of example words below and choose one word to summarize your passions. Your word does NOT have to come from this list; use it as a starting point.

- Authenticity
- Awe
- Beauty
- Community
- Compassion
- Courage
- Creativity
- Dreams
- Faith
- Futures
- Growth
- Healing
- Hope
- Innovation
- Inspiration
- Joy
- Justice
- Knowledge
- Leadership
- Learning
- Love
- Peace
- Potential
- Redemption
- Relationships
- Service
- Strength
- Transformation
- Truth
- Understanding
- Unity
- Value
- Wisdom
- Wonder



ONE WORD TO SUMMARIZE MY GOD-GIVEN PASSIONS:

Example: Wonders



VIDEO DISCUSSION:

1. What stood out to you in this video?
2. Given that “passion is conviction that withstands pain,” what do you think your deepest passions are? How have these passions been tested and proven through pain and/or challenges?
3. Make a first attempt at naming your deepest passions with one word.
4. Make another attempt at naming your “two words.” Look back on Equip #19, if needed.
5. How might your deepest passions be tied to the Great Commission?



HOMEWORK

Finish the exercises above: (1) Passions 360, (2) Offender Opposites, (3) Passion Funnel, and (4) Naming Your Passions.

Remember your goal is to summarize your passions with one word (a noun—person, place, or thing). Be prepared to discuss your one word at the start of the next session.

 **EQUIP #21: MY TWO WORDS** **OPENING DISCUSSION:**

Share the one word that you chose to summarize your God-given passions (see Equip #20). How does this word reflect your deepest convictions?

Watch Video #21 **MY TWO WORDS**

Your “two words” describe your personal calling and complete the following thought:

I exist to glorify God and make disciples by

_____ ing _____.
[Abilities] [Passions]

TIPS FOR FINALIZING YOUR TWO WORDS:

1. Be _____. Try to avoid generic words like “Worshiping God.” This is a great description of general calling, but it fails to capture your unique role in God’s Kingdom. Ask yourself questions to be more specific: “What is the *unique* way I help others worship God?” For example, you might choose “Igniting Joy” to capture how you inspire joy of the Lord in others.
2. Be _____. Try to choose two words that apply to multiple areas of your life. For example, “Teaching Students” may capture your role as a teacher, but it doesn’t apply to other realms of your life. “Building Foundations” captures your role as a teacher, but it also applies to other spheres of life.
3. Be _____. Look for ways to make your two words more unique to you. Think about how you can capture your hobbies, interests, and/or personality with the words you choose. See the next page for examples.

EXAMPLES OF MAKING YOUR TWO WORDS MORE CREATIVE/UNIQUE

- Creating Excellence → Refining Diamonds
- Fostering Growth → Cultivating Eden
- Teaching Foundations → Building Bedrock

MORE TWO WORD EXAMPLES:

- Amplifying Atmospheres
- Awakening Sleepers
- Building Bridges
- Creating Sunshine
- Encouraging Hope
- Excavating Joy
- Fostering Community
- Guiding Truth
- Igniting Joy
- Illuminating Pathways
- Illuminating Shadows
- Illustrating Beginnings
- Inspiring Innovation
- Making Connections
- Mapping Vocations
- Maximizing Potential
- Mining Potential
- Nurturing Futures
- Unearthing Wonders
- Unleashing Potential
- Rebounding Futures
- Restoring Wholeness
- Training Conquerors
- Welcoming Authenticity



EXERCISE: FINALIZING YOUR TWO WORDS

The words you chose to summarize your God-given abilities (Equip #19) and passions (Equip #20) give you the starting point for your two words. List those words below.

ABILITIES:

Example: Unearthing

PASSIONS:

Example: Wonders

Using the words you selected for your abilities and passions as a starting point, and using the tips and examples given previously, list as many combinations for your two words as you can:

1. _____

11. _____

2. _____

12. _____

3. _____

13. _____

4. _____

14. _____

5. _____

15. _____

6. _____

16. _____

7. _____

17. _____

8. _____

18. _____

9. _____

19. _____

10. _____

20. _____

CHOOSING YOUR FINAL TWO WORDS

1. Choose 2-3 of your favorite two words from your list above.
2. Get feedback! Share your favorite two words with a few people you trust. Ask them, "Which two words fit me best? Why?"
3. Using feedback from others, pick your final two words and write them below.



MY TWO WORDS:

I exist to glorify God and make disciples by:



VIDEO DISCUSSION:

Share your current version of your two words with each other and give any feedback/ideas you have.



HOMEWORK

Finish naming your two words! If you need help brainstorming your two words, send an email to luke.cousino@bedfordalliance.church. I'd love to help!

See the next page for a bonus exercise on using your two words to write a personal mission statement.



BONUS EXERCISE: WRITING A PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT

Your mission statement works alongside your “two words” to provide personal clarity and give you a concise way of articulating your calling to others. While your two words will be most meaningful to you, your mission statement may be more helpful in explaining your calling to others.

TIPS FOR WRITING A MISSION STATEMENT:

- Make it **brief!** Aim for 6 to 12 words.
- Make it **bold!** Your mission statement should excite you.
- Make it **big!** Your mission statement should apply to every area of your life.
- Make it **best** for today! Write it down now, even though it may change or improve over time.

QUESTIONS TO GET YOU STARTED:

- How would you explain your two words to a friend at a coffee shop?
- As you look back at your “honorable mention” two words (see Equip #21), are there any words you might want to include in your mission statement?
- What words, ideas, or Scriptures have been especially meaningful in your life? How could you include these in your mission statement?

DRAFTING A MISSION STATEMENT

Using your two words as a starting point, draft as many mission statements as you can on the next page.

Hint: You can often use the first word of your two words (or a similar word) as the first word of your mission statement.

My Two Words: _____

Draft Mission Statements:

EXAMPLE:

My Two Words: _____ *Unearthing* _____ *Wonders* _____

Draft Mission Statements:

- *Unearthing awe-inspiring wonders in God's Word and His creation*
- *Unearthing awe-inspiring wonders in God's Word and world*
- *Exploring and revealing awe-inspiring wonders in God Word and world*
- *Revealing awe-inspiring wonders in God's Word and His world*
- *Igniting awe of God by revealing wonders in His Word and world*
- *Igniting awe of God by unearthing wonders in His Word and world*

CHOOSING A FINAL MISSION STATEMENT

1. Circle the 2-3 draft mission statements that stand out to you most.
2. Get feedback! Share your draft mission statements with a few others you trust and ask, “Which mission statement gives you the clearest understanding of my calling?”
3. Using feedback from others, pick your final mission statement and write it below



MY MISSION STATEMENT

Example Mission Statements:

- Unearthing Wonders → Unearthing awe-inspiring wonders in God’s Word and world
- Refining Diamonds → Polishing raw material into its most valuable form
- Cultivating Eden → Growing knowledge of God into friendship with God
- Building Bedrock → Building Biblical foundations in people so they withstand the storms of life
- Inspiring Innovation → Developing Kingdom-minded leaders who never settle for the status quo

EQUIP #22: LIVING OUT MY CALLING

OPENING DISCUSSION:

Share your final two words (and personal mission statement, if applicable) with each other. Can you think of ways you can apply these two words in various areas of your life?

Watch Video #22

CLARIFICATIONS ABOUT LIVING OUT YOUR CALLING

- Your personal calling is how you use your God-given _____ (abilities/passions) to glorify God and make disciples in your unique _____ of impact.
- Your calling is NOT equivalent to a _____—it involves all spheres of life.
- God can use your job/career as _____ of living out your calling; He does call some people to specific work.
- God most often wants us to make a difference in our _____ circumstances (1 Corinthians 7:17-24). We should focus on being faithful to our calling in our present context and allow God to bring other opportunities as He leads.
- Don't worry about changing the world. Focus on making a difference in your _____ world.
- J.D. Greear: "The question is no longer *if* you are called to leverage your life for the Great Commission, only *where* and *how*. However God gifted you, He gifted you with the Great Commission in mind."

BRAINSTORMING HOW TO LIVE OUT YOUR CALLING

Since your personal calling involves all spheres of life, spend time brainstorming what it might look like for you to live out your two words in the different areas of your life. Use the questions, prompts, and examples provided to help you. Don't worry about figuring out details right now; just jot down anything that comes to mind.

PERSONAL:

- What areas of personal growth are needed to fully embrace and live out your calling?
- What specific resources (books, courses, experiences) can you seek out to be better equipped to live out your calling? How can you sharpen your abilities?
- What personal project (writing a blog/book, starting a podcast, creating artwork or music, building projects) could you start to glorify God and make a difference in the lives of others?

IDEAS:**Examples:**

- Spend regular time in God's Word and creation.
- Read books that equip me to better understand God's Word and creation.
- Study New Testament Greek to better unearth wonders in Scripture.
- Find courses/materials that help me improve as a communicator (speaking and writing).
- Start a writing project to help people see the wonders in God's Word and creation .

HOME:

- How can you integrate your two words into daily routines and interactions with family?
- How can you use your God-given abilities and passions to create an environment of spiritual growth within your household?
- How can you use your two words to strengthen your marriage?

IDEAS:**Examples:**

- Start regular family devotions to help unearth wonders in Scripture for my kids— include moments about the wonders in God's creation.
- Do regular nature walks to help instill awe/wonder of God in my kids.
- Help my wife uncover and name her personal calling and support her as she lives it out.

CIRCLE OF IMPACT (FAMILY, FRIENDS, WORK, NEIGHBORHOOD):

- Write down the people (both saved and unsaved) you come into contact with on a regular basis (family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc.).
- For the unsaved people in your life, how can you use your abilities and passions as a starting point to invite them into a relationship with Christ?
- For the people in your life who already have a relationship with Christ, how can you use your abilities and passions to intentionally help them grow in their faith?
- Who in your life could you lead through Equip? How could you incorporate your two words as you invest in them?

IDEAS:**Examples:**

- Recruit 2-3 friends to go through Equip together—include moments of “unearthing wonders” along the way.
- Invite unsaved friends to spend time outdoors through hunting, fishing, and/or hiking—use it as an opportunity to share my testimony and point to the wonders of God’s creation.
- Have at least one intentional “unearthing wonders” conversation each week with someone in my circle of impact.

CHURCH:

- How can you use your personal calling to serve and contribute to your church family?
- What church ministries best align with your calling, and how can you get involved?
 - Lead a Small Group! Our groups are a place for you to live out your God-given calling as you invest in others to do the same. We allow our leaders to form groups around their abilities and passions. The options are endless!
 - Join a Serve Team! We have a variety of serving options in the church—including Kids, Students, Care, Creative & Communications, First Impressions, Productions, Safety & Security, Prayer, and more! Serve teams give you the chance to use your passions and abilities to strengthen our church family.
 - Lead others from the church through Equip! Regardless of your two words, you can use Equip to invest in others, and you can tailor your approach to fit your personal calling. Use your abilities and passions to create a personalized experience that goes beyond the material, fostering discipleship through deep relationships.

IDEAS:

Examples:

- Start a Small Group centered around the wonders of creation and how they reflect the character of God.
- Start a Small Group discussing the intersection of science and faith.
- Recruit 2-3 men from church to go through Equip—include intentional moments of “unearthing wonders” from Scripture and creation. Look for opportunities to take the group outdoors to experience God’s creation.



MORE EXAMPLES OF LIVING OUT YOUR CALLING

PERSONAL:

- Attend a conference/training or read relevant books to further your abilities.
- Start a blog or website, write a book, launch a podcast, or create a YouTube channel to share your abilities/passions and help others.

HOME:

- Lead family devotions in a way that reflects your personal calling.
- Set aside intentional time (family projects or outings) to invest in your family in a way that incorporates your abilities and passions.
- Look for daily opportunities to encourage and invest in your spouse or other family members in a way that's consistent with your two words.

CIRCLE OF IMPACT:

- Call a friend once a week to encourage them in their walk with Christ.
- Start a mom/dad's group in your neighborhood to create disciple-making opportunities.
- Start a discussion group, book club, or prayer group during your lunch break at work.
- Use your skills (building, cooking, crafting, gardening, landscaping, repairing) to help a neighbor and create further investing opportunities.
- Host a cookout or bonfire with unsaved friends to start having Gospel conversations.
- Share your personal testimony (see Equip #15) with people in your circle of impact, highlighting how God has given you purpose through your personal calling. Use your story as a way to connect with others and invite them into a relationship with Jesus.

CHURCH:

- Lead a Small Group centered around your abilities, passions, and/or hobbies.
- Look for serving opportunities tailored to your abilities and passions.
- Find someone in a similar season of life or who is facing similar trials to walk alongside. Consider getting coffee once a month to encourage them and pray for them.



VIDEO DISCUSSION:

1. Which of the “clarifications” about living out your calling did you find most helpful? Why? How did these ideas change the way you think about what it means to live out your calling?
2. Spend time brainstorming with each other how you will live out your God-given calling. What area(s) of your life do you think you will focus on most in the near future?



HOMEWORK

Finish brainstorming different ways to live out your God-given calling. If you need help coming up with ideas, feel free to send an email to luke.cousino@bedfordalliance.church. I'd love to help!



RESOURCES:

For more info about Small Groups and Serve Teams at BAC, use the QR codes (below).



EQUIP #23: MY 90-DAY GOAL

OPENING DISCUSSION:

Share some of the top ideas you brainstormed in the last session (Equip #22) about how to live out your calling. Is there one idea that resonates with you the most?

Watch Video #23

THE POWER OF A 90-DAY GOAL¹

- There's something about a 90-day period that's naturally ingrained in us and our culture: it aligns with the length of seasons (in our climate), school semesters, and business quarters.
- 90 days is far enough away to accomplish something _____ but close enough to create _____.
- Things that have been accomplished in 90 days (or fewer):
 - Boot camp turns a recruit into a Marine in about 90 days.
 - Thru-hikers have traveled the entire Appalachian trail (2,189 miles) from Maine to Georgia in under 90 days.
 - In 2004, Frenchman Vincent Riou became the first person to sail around the world solo in under 90 days.
 - In 1788, Mozart composed two piano trios, two piano sonatas, a violin sonata, his last three (and arguably his greatest) symphonies, and three other pieces of music in 90 days.
- If you set and meet one 90-day goal at a time, in ten years, you will have accomplished _____ goals.
- A 90-day goal brings singular _____ to your actions and prayer life.

¹ This section is derived from *Younique: Designing the Life that God Dreamed for You* by Will Mancini.



NARROWING YOUR FOCUS

Look back on the ideas for living out your personal calling that you brainstormed during the last session (Equip #22). Select 3-5 of your top ideas and write them in the box below:

MY TOP IDEAS FOR LIVING OUT MY CALLING:

Example:

- Start a writing project that unearths wonders in God's Word and world.
- Start family devotions to unearth wonders in God's Word and world for my kids.
- Start a Small Group that discusses the intersection of science and faith.
- Recruit 2-3 other men to go through Equip with.

SELECTING ONE IDEA TO FOCUS ON:

From your list of 3-5 ideas above, select one idea to focus on using the prompts below:

1. Spend time in prayer—ask God to reveal where you need to focus your efforts for the next 90 days.
2. Consider the following questions:
 - Which idea most closely aligns with my abilities and passions?
 - Which idea addresses an immediate need in my circle of impact?
 - Which idea best helps me make disciples by intentionally inviting and investing?
 - Which idea, if accomplished, will help me build momentum toward larger goals?
 - Which idea am I most motivated to accomplish?
 - Which idea can be realistically achieved within a 90-day timeframe?
3. Write your final idea in the box below:

[Example: Start a writing project centered around “unearthing wonders” in God’s Word and world.]



MAKING A SMART GOAL

Using the idea you selected above, create a SMART goal using the criteria below:

- _____: Make your goal precise! Avoid vague or general statements.
 - **Before:** Invest in my family more.
 - **After:** Lead family devotions.
- _____: You should be able to clearly track progress and measure whether or not you accomplished your goal.
 - **Before:** Lead family devotions.
 - **After:** Lead family devotions every morning.

- _____: Make your goal realistic! Your goal should challenge you but shouldn't be so far out of reach that you give up a few weeks in.
 - **Before:** Lead family devotions every morning.
 - **After:** Lead family devotions once a week.
- _____: Your goal should be related to your personal calling and the Great Commission.
 - **Before:** Lead family devotions once a week.
 - **After:** Lead family devotions once a week and include an “unearthing wonders” moment each time.
- _____: Set a deadline! We recommend about a 90-day period.
 - **Before:** Lead family devotions once a week and include an “unearthing wonders” moment each time.
 - **After:** By January 1st, I will lead family devotions with an “unearthing wonders” moment at least 10 times.

More Examples of Turning Vague Ideas into ‘SMART’ Goals:

- **Before:** Share the gospel more.
- **After:** By January 1st, I will share my testimony and two words with at least 3 unsaved people in my life.
- **Before:** Help people in my circle of impact grow in their faith.
- **After:** From now until January 1st, I will have at least one “unearthing wonders” conversation each week with someone in my circle of impact.
- **Before:** Get more involved in church.
- **After:** By January 1st, I will find and join a serve team that helps me live out my two words.
- **Before:** Invest in the next generation.
- **After:** By January 1st, I will recruit 2-3 young adults from the church to start going through Equip, and I will include one moment of “unearthing wonders” in each session.

Use the space below to start forming your SMART goal:



MY 90-DAY GOAL:



VIDEO DISCUSSION:

Spend time brainstorming your 90-day goals with each other. Help each other make goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-sensitive.



HOMEWORK

Finish your 90-day goal! If you need help, feel free to send an email to luke.cousino@bedfordalliance.church. I'd love to help!

EQUIP #24: LAUNCHING OUT

OPENING DISCUSSION:

Share your final 90-day goal with each other. What excites you about your goal? What challenges do you foresee?

Watch Video #24

RE-VISITING YOUR 90-DAY GOAL

Write down the name of the person who will hold you accountable for your current goal:

Every 90 days, set aside a time away from distractions to review your current goal and set a new goal. **Use the worksheet on page 115 to guide you through this process.**

FINAL THOUGHTS

- The Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14–30)
 - A “talent” was a unit of money equivalent to about _____ years’ wages. But in the context of this parable, “talents” also represent the _____ and _____ God has given us.
 - Not everyone is given the _____ gifts and abilities. But we’re only held _____ for what we’ve been given.
 - Regardless of how much or how little God has given you, we’re called to _____ use our gifts for His glory.
 - Don’t be someone who _____ their talents.

-
- “Only one life, ’twill soon be past; only what’s done for Christ will last.” –C.T. Studd
 - “Too long have we been waiting for one another to begin! The time for waiting is past! The hour of God has struck! War is declared! In God’s holy name let us arise and build! The God of Heaven, He will fight for us, as we for Him. We will not build on the sand, but on the bedrock of the sayings of Christ, and the gates and minions of hell shall not prevail against us. Should such [people] as we fear? Before the whole world...before the sleepy, lukewarm, faithless, namby-pamby Christian world, we will dare to trust our God, we will venture our all for Him, we will live and we will die for Him, and we will do it with His joy unspeakable singing aloud in our hearts.” –C.T. Studd



VIDEO DISCUSSION:

1. What stood out to you about the discussion of the parable of the talents?
2. What are some practical strategies you can implement to help you stay focused on your 90-day goal?
3. How and when will you set aside intentional time to evaluate your current goal and set a new one for the next 90 days?
4. Reflect on the journey you’ve taken through the Equip curriculum:
 - What have been some of your most significant takeaways?
 - How has your understanding of your personal calling evolved through this process?
5. Who is someone in your life who might benefit from this material?



LAUNCHING OUT

Let us know when you finish Equip! Use the QR code (right) and click “Completion Form.” Once you fill out the form, we’ll celebrate with you by sending a certificate!





RE-VISITING YOUR 90-DAY GOAL



REVIEWING YOUR PREVIOUS GOAL:

Write down your previous 90-day goal in the box below:

Spend time in prayer as you think through the following questions. Write down any reflections in the box below:

- Did you accomplish your goal? What went well? What challenges did you face?
- What have you learned about yourself or your calling over the last 90 days?
- Looking back, what would you do differently if you had to start this goal again?
- Looking forward, do you need to (1) continue progress toward your current goal, (2) adapt/modify your current goal, or (3) choose a new goal to focus on?

REFLECTIONS



CREATING YOUR NEXT GOAL:

Write down any ideas you have for your next goal. This could include modifications of your current goal and/or a new goal. For a new goal, consider your personal life, family, circle of impact, and church involvement. How can you use your unique abilities and passions to make a difference in these areas? (See Equip #22 for more detailed questions.)

IDEAS FOR YOUR NEXT GOAL:

Spend time in prayer and reflection, and narrow your focus to one goal. Remember to make your next goal *SMART*:

- **Specific:** Be clear!
- **Measurable:** Make it trackable!
- **Achievable:** Keep it realistic!
- **Relevant:** Make it align with your calling!
- **Time-Sensitive:** Set a deadline (about 90 days)!



MY NEXT 90-DAY GOAL:

The person I will share this goal with for accountability: _____