

*a journey to  
hearing God*



*this journal belongs to:*



## *how to use this journal*

When it comes to learning how to hear God, there are many practices which can be helpful tools to us. Over the next three weeks we will start down this path together, and this journal will assist you on your journey. Each week will focus on a specific practice, which, together are meant to provide a holistic framework to guide you in times of devotion.

As you head into your week, we have provided space for you to journal as you practice each of these on a daily basis. Each day's journal contains reflection questions to guide you. This journal is not meant to replace your regular, daily devotion, but to assist you as you focus in on the practices we are working through.

Each day will begin with a passage of Scripture to guide your time. We have provided a variety of passages throughout the Bible to show how these practices are useful tools as we approach the whole of Scripture. As you spend time with God don't feel like you have to strictly adhere to the reflection questions we have provided. These are meant to be a framework to guide you along.

Finally, our prayer is that God will speak to you as you spend time with him. However, you may come across a thought or feeling that you don't feel comfortable sharing in your breakout group. Know that your facilitator is here to support you, and please reach out if you want to speak with them directly about something you're working through.

God is always present and faithful to reveal himself to us if we put ourselves in a posture to listen and receive from him. We are so excited to see what he has for you in the weeks to come!

*"Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you."*  
Jeremiah 29:12-14



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I.  
HEARING GOD THROUGH  
SCRIPTURE.

# I.

## weekly discipline: *scripture meditation*

*The goal of meditation is to attend to God by directing our gaze toward him. Practically, this means spending extended time sitting and slowly thinking through Scripture.*

God is ever-present in our lives. Psalm 139:7 reads, “Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?” God is all around us and ready to communicate with us, the question is whether or not we listen.

In the midst of our busy culture, meditation is a discipline that puts us in a position to stop and gaze at God. Meditation is the act of setting our gaze on God and remaining in that place, free from the distractions of the world.

Our first discipline is meditating on Scripture. Hebrews 4:12 tells us “*the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*”

It is for this reason that we begin our first week of exercises by meditating on Scripture. The truth of Scripture is a solid foundation upon which to begin building a foundation to hearing God.

As you work through your passages this week, let these questions guide you in your meditation. It may be challenging to be still at first, but God is faithful to reveal himself to us through his “*living and active*” word.

When you find yourself distracted, use these questions to turn your gaze back toward the text, and let the truth of Scripture guide your time of reflection.



## ***our daily practices—***

### ***remove distractions and create comfortable space.***

Remove any distractions as you prepare to spend time with God through Scripture. Silence your cell phone and set it aside. Find a quiet and comfortable place. Briefly pray to God and release any anxieties or preoccupations as you begin.

### ***read, reread, reflect.***

Take your time reading and rereading through the passage slowly. Spend time with each word and phrase. Write down and begin to reflect on any questions or observations that come to mind.

### ***what's the truth? do I believe it? do I live it?***

Feel free to think through any or all of these questions: *What is the core truth of this passage? What does it tell you about God? Do you believe that these verses are true? Do you live as though they are relevant to your life?*

### ***search your heart for thoughts, feelings, and images.***

As you spend time with this passage, *what thoughts or feelings come to mind? Is there a specific idea or image that you keep coming back to?* Take these thoughts and feelings to God in prayer. Spend time with them.

### ***process with God and carry a word or idea into your day.***

Do not feel you have to wrap up all of your thoughts. Perhaps a question arose that you will continue to pray through. As you end, select a specific word or idea that resonated with you. Carry it into your day through prayer. Optionally, you can select a verse to memorize.

D A Y

## **I** *scripture meditation*

Read and reread the passage slowly. Write down any questions that come to mind. *What is the core truth of this passage? What does it tell you about God? Do you believe that these verses are true? Do you live as though they are relevant to your life?* As you spend time with this passage, *what thoughts or feelings come to mind?* Select a specific word or idea that resonated with you and carry it into your day through prayer.

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## *the great shepherd.*

*1 The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, 3 he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. 4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. 6 Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

**Psalm 23:1-6, NIV**

D A Y

## 2 *scripture meditation*

Read and reread the passage slowly. Write down any questions that come to mind. *What is the core truth of this passage? What does it tell you about God? Do you believe that these verses are true? Do you live as though they are relevant to your life?* As you spend time with this passage, *what thoughts or feelings come to mind?* Select a specific word or idea that resonated with you and carry it into your day through prayer.

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## *man of sorrows.*

*1 Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? 2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. 3 He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. 4 Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. 6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

**Isaiah 53:1-6, NIV**

D A Y

# 3 *scripture meditation*

Read and reread the passage slowly. Write down any questions that come to mind. *What is the core truth of this passage? What does it tell you about God? Do you believe that these verses are true? Do you live as though they are relevant to your life?* As you spend time with this passage, *what thoughts or feelings come to mind?* Select a specific word or idea that resonated with you and carry it into your day through prayer.

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## *do not be anxious.*

25 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? 28 "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? 31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

**Matthew 6:25-34, NIV**

D A Y

# 4 *scripture meditation*

Read and reread the passage slowly. Write down any questions that come to mind. *What is the core truth of this passage? What does it tell you about God? Do you believe that these verses are true? Do you live as though they are relevant to your life?* As you spend time with this passage, *what thoughts or feelings come to mind?* Select a specific word or idea that resonated with you and carry it into your day through prayer.

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## *the lost son.*

11 Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them. 13 "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. 14 After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. 16 He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. 17 "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! 18 I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' 20 So he got up and went to his father. "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. 21 "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. 24 For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

**Luke 15:11-24, NIV**

D A Y

# 5

## *scripture meditation*

Read and reread the passage slowly. Write down any questions that come to mind. *What is the core truth of this passage? What does it tell you about God? Do you believe that these verses are true? Do you live as though they are relevant to your life?* As you spend time with this passage, *what thoughts or feelings come to mind?* Select a specific word or idea that resonated with you and carry it into your day through prayer.

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## *I am the true vine.*

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

**John 15:1-11, NIV**

D A Y

# 6 *scripture meditation*

Read and reread the passage slowly. Write down any questions that come to mind. *What is the core truth of this passage? What does it tell you about God? Do you believe that these verses are true? Do you live as though they are relevant to your life?* As you spend time with this passage, *what thoughts or feelings come to mind?* Select a specific word or idea that resonated with you and carry it into your day through prayer.

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## *while we were still sinners...*

*1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. 6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! 10 For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! 11 Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.*

**Romans 5:1-11, NIV**

D A Y

# 7 *scripture meditation*

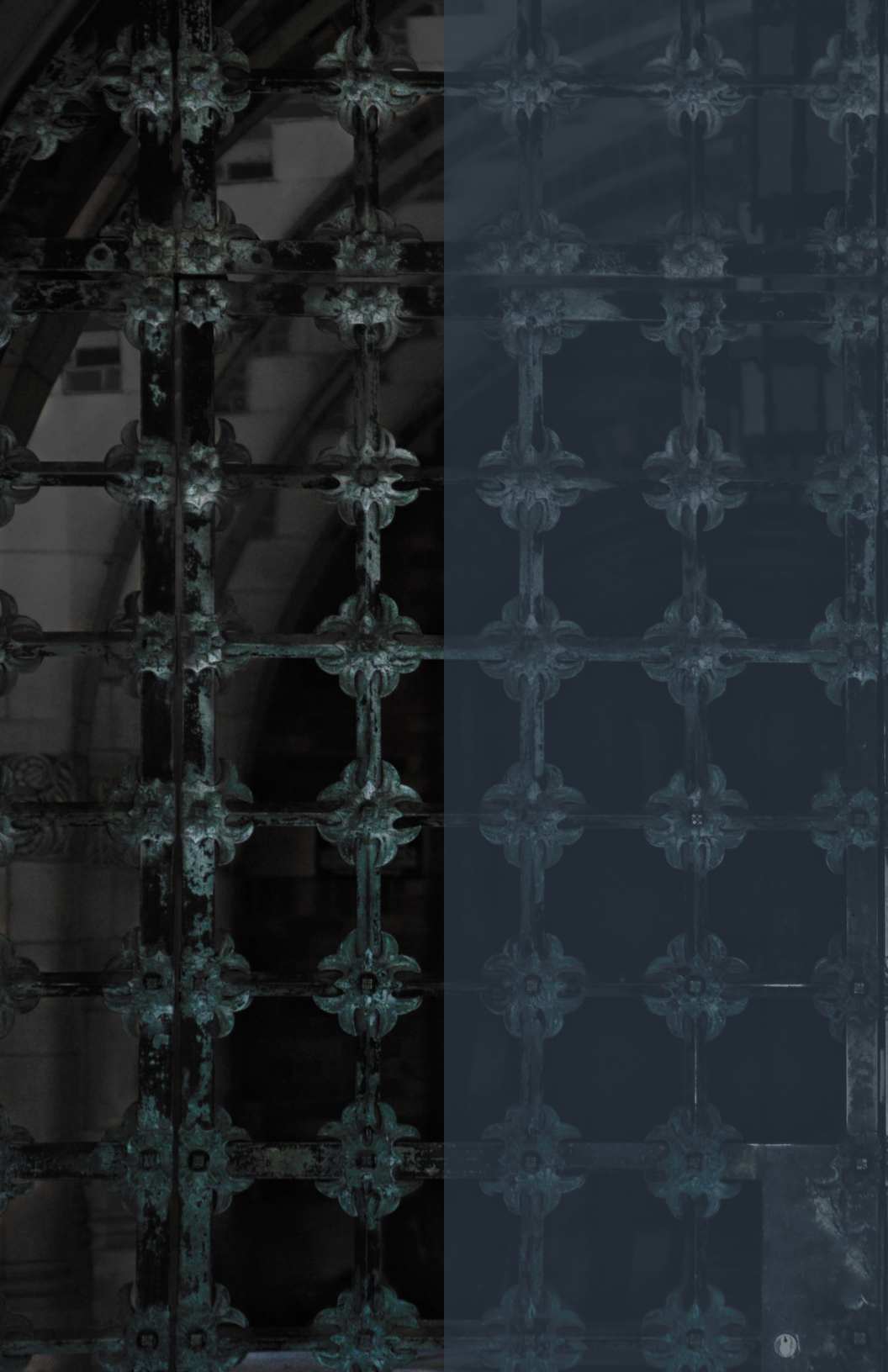
Read and reread the passage slowly. Write down any questions that come to mind. *What is the core truth of this passage? What does it tell you about God? Do you believe that these verses are true? Do you live as though they are relevant to your life?* As you spend time with this passage, *what thoughts or feelings come to mind?* Select a specific word or idea that resonated with you and carry it into your day through prayer.

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## *the fruit of the spirit*

*16 So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*

**Galatians 5:16-24, NIV**







2.

HEARING GOD THROUGH  
*HIS SPIRIT.*

## 2.

# weekly discipline: *listening prayer*

*The goal of listening prayer is to hear God's truth through the low whisper of his voice. Practically, this means being still and contemplating or waiting on God without distraction.*

With the space that meditation on Scripture creates, we can turn to listening to God through prayer. Life's distractions are persistent, and we are always listening to something. Listening prayer invites us to release ourselves from all of our inner commentary, self-criticism, or catastrophic thinking. In listening prayer we practice listening to the voice of God instead of our own internal dialogue or the voice of the evil one, just as Jesus trusted the word of God over the temptations of Satan in Matthew 4.

As we begin to listen to God's voice, the first thing we realize is that we cannot control God. We must say as Eli does, "*Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening*" (1 Samuel 3:9-10). In doing this we choose to present ourselves as recipients, ready to receive what the Lord has to offer. With practice, you will become increasingly familiar with the nature and manner of God's voice.

As you begin to position yourself to hear from God through prayer, trust that God has something to say. Elijah heard the voice of God not in a strong wind, powerful earthquake, or great fire, but in "*the sound of a low whisper*" (1 Kings 19:11-13). This low whisper of God's voice is always consistent with the truth of God through Scripture, which is why meditation on Scripture is a necessary foundation.

Jesus encourages us in this when he says in John 16:13: "*When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak.*"

## ***our daily practices—***

### ***distraction is okay, center yourself with a word like “Jesus.”***

Before you begin your time of listening prayer, know that it is okay to struggle with distraction. If you struggle with distraction, stop and turn your thoughts back to Jesus. You can even repeat a word or phrase in prayer to ground your thoughts, such as “Jesus” or “*Speak Lord, for your servant is listening.*” Try not to continue down the road of wandering thoughts or your own internal voice of criticism.

### ***create a comfortable space and return to your passage or idea.***

Remove distractions as you did last week. Return to the passage you meditated on. Read through the passage once or twice and allow one idea to stand out to you. If there was anything that stood out to you when you meditated last week on this passage, bring that back to your mind.

### ***ask the Holy Spirit for revelation, pause and listen for God’s voice.***

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal what God could be trying to tell you about this subject. Ask in prayer, then pause and listen. Allow yourself to experience the low whisper of God’s voice. This could come in a single word, or a phrase, or an image in your head. *What do you hear?* Feel free to ask questions back to God and continue pulling that thread.

### ***don’t be discouraged by silence.***

Remember, you cannot control God’s voice. If you have created space but do not hear anything from God, do not be discouraged. God is still ever-present and will share with you in his good time.

### ***check your word against scripture and share with others.***

You can check what you are hearing is from God by asking the following: *does it align with scripture? Is it true or encouraging? Does it bring you peace, joy, or comfort? Finally, can God’s word to you be confirmed by another believer?* Write it down to share!

D A Y

# 8

## *listening prayer*

**Revisit Psalm 23.** Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal what God could be trying to tell you about this psalm. Ask. Pause. Listen. Allow yourself to experience the low whisper of God's voice. This could come in a single word, or a phrase, or an image in your head. *What do you hear?* Feel free to ask questions back to God and continue pulling that thread. Write down any thoughts that come to mind.

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D A Y

# 9 *listening prayer*


**Revisit Isaiah 53:1-6.** Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal what God could be trying to tell you about the prophet's words. Ask. Pause. Listen. Allow yourself to experience the low whisper of God's voice. This could come in a single word, or a phrase, or an image in your head. *What do you hear?* Feel free to ask questions back to God and continue pulling that thread. Write down any thoughts that come to mind.



D A Y

# 10 *listening prayer*

**Revisit Matthew 6:25-34.** Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal what God could be trying to tell you through Jesus's words to his disciples. Ask. Pause. Listen. Allow yourself to experience the low whisper of God's voice. This could come in a single word, or a phrase, or an image in your head. *What do you hear?* Feel free to ask questions back to God and continue pulling that thread. Write down any thoughts that come to mind.



D A Y

## II *listening prayer*

**Revisit Luke 15:11-24.** Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal what God could be trying to tell you through this parable. Ask. Pause. Listen. Allow yourself to experience the low whisper of God's voice. This could come in a single word, or a phrase, or an image in your head. *What do you hear?* Feel free to ask questions back to God and continue pulling that thread. Write down any thoughts that come to mind.

A large grid of small squares, intended for writing notes or reflections during the listening prayer exercise.

D A Y

# I2 *listening prayer*

**Revisit John 15:1-11.** Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal what God could be trying to tell you through this metaphor. Ask. Pause. Listen. Allow yourself to experience the low whisper of God's voice. This could come in a single word, or a phrase, or an image in your head. *What do you hear?* Feel free to ask questions back to God and continue pulling that thread. Write down any thoughts that come to mind.

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D A Y

# 13 *listening prayer*

**Revisit Romans 5:1-11.** Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal what God could be trying to tell you about Paul's words. Ask. Pause. Listen. Allow yourself to experience the low whisper of God's voice. This could come in a single word, or a phrase, or an image in your head. *What do you hear?* Feel free to ask questions back to God and continue pulling that thread. Write down any thoughts that come to mind.

A large grid of small squares, intended for writing notes or reflections during the listening prayer exercise.

D A Y

# I4 *listening prayer*

**Revisit Galatians 5:16-24.** Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal what it means to be a person who walks in the Spirit. Ask. Pause. Listen. Allow yourself to experience the low whisper of God's voice. This could come in a single word, or a phrase, or an image in your head. *What do you hear?* Feel free to ask questions back to God and continue pulling that thread. Write down any thoughts that come to mind.

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*When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak.*

JOHN 16:13



A photograph of a woman with blonde hair tied back, smiling and looking to the left. She is wearing a red t-shirt. The background is dark and out of focus, showing other people in a church setting. A small red light is visible in the upper right corner.

3.

HEARING GOD THROUGH  
*HIS PEOPLE.*

### 3.

## weekly practice: *spirit-led encouragement*

*The goal of spirit-led encouragement is to build others up and show them how God sees them. Practically, this means praying and asking God to give you encouraging words for one another.*

Each and every person is uniquely and wonderfully made by God (Psalm 139:14). When we are blessed and encouraged by one another we are able to more fully realize the truth of our identity. We are able to see ourselves the way God sees us, instead of with respect to any lies that we have come to believe. In this same way we as the Church are called to have this view toward one another: *“Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works... encouraging one another”* (Hebrews 10:24-25).

We can take the first step through encouraging one another in the things we see, but we can take one more step by calling out the things that God sees in each of us. Having grown in hearing God's voice, we can participate in the truth that God sees in each of us by listening to and sharing that truth. At the core of this truth is that we are precious in God's eyes (Isaiah 43:4).

As you speak the love of God into others this week, know that you are helping that person build a shield of truth around their heart to protect them from the lies of the enemy. God's loving word does not accuse, condemn, or destroy us. Even in challenge and conviction, God's love never wavers. God's delight is always in us, and he is ever-present in our lives. God says, *“I have loved you with an everlasting love”* (Jeremiah 31:3).

## *our daily practices—*

### ***create a comfortable space and return to your passage or idea.***

As you prepare to listen for an encouragement God has for another person, free yourself from distraction. Invite God into your space in prayer. Refer to the Scripture or idea that you have meditated and prayed through for the previous two weeks on that corresponding day.

### ***ask God for a person to encourage.***

As you spend time thinking through the idea or reading through these verses, allow God to lead you to the person you can encourage today. Let his still voice lead you to think of someone in your breakout group. Perhaps he may also lead you to a family member, or a close friend.

### ***pray for biblical truth that could encourage.***

Continue to pray through the idea or verses that you have before you. *What truth can you see from your meditation on this passage that God might give for you to encourage another person with today?*

### ***pray for revelation to see them as God sees them.***

Perhaps instead God has a truth to reveal to you through listening prayer. Ask God to help you see this person the way he sees them. *What word, phrase, or image comes to mind? Is there a specific idea you can take to them as an encouragement?*


### ***check your encouragement against scripture.***

Check your encouragement against scripture and God's truth. Remember not to root it in comparison. For example, instead of saying, *"You're the nicest person in our core group,"* think about saying instead, *"God has given you such a kind heart towards those around you. He loves that about you."*

D A Y

# 15 *spirit-led encouragement*

**Revisit Psalm 23.** *What truth can you see from your meditation on this passage that God might give for you to encourage another person with today? Ask God to help you see this person the way he sees them. What word, phrase, or image comes to mind? Is there a specific idea you can take to them as an encouragement? Check your encouragement against Scripture and consider sharing it with that person.*





D A Y

I6


## *spirit-led encouragement*

**Revisit Isaiah 53:1-6.** *What truth can you see from your meditation on this passage that God might give for you to encourage another person with today? Ask God to help you see this person the way he sees them. What word, phrase, or image comes to mind? Is there a specific idea you can take to them as an encouragement? Check your encouragement against Scripture and consider sharing it with that person.*

D A Y

# I7 *spirit-led encouragement*

**Revisit Matthew 6:25-34.** *What truth can you see from your meditation on this passage that God might give for you to encourage another person with today? Ask God to help you see this person the way he sees them. What word, phrase, or image comes to mind? Is there a specific idea you can take to them as an encouragement? Check your encouragement against Scripture and consider sharing it with that person.*



D A Y

I 8

## *spirit-led encouragement*

**Revisit Luke 15:11-24.** *What truth can you see from your meditation on this passage that God might give for you to encourage another person with today? Ask God to help you see this person the way he sees them. What word, phrase, or image comes to mind? Is there a specific idea you can take to them as an encouragement? Check your encouragement against Scripture and consider sharing it with that person.*

D A Y

# I9 *spirit-led encouragement*

**Revisit John 15:1-11.** *What truth can you see from your meditation on this passage that God might give for you to encourage another person with today? Ask God to help you see this person the way he sees them. What word, phrase, or image comes to mind? Is there a specific idea you can take to them as an encouragement? Check your encouragement against Scripture and consider sharing it with that person.*



D A Y


## 20 *spirit-led encouragement*

**Revisit Romans 5:1-11.** *What truth can you see from your meditation on this passage that God might give for you to encourage another person with today? Ask God to help you see this person the way he sees them. What word, phrase, or image comes to mind? Is there a specific idea you can take to them as an encouragement? Check your encouragement against Scripture and consider sharing it with that person.*

D A Y

## 21 *spirit-led encouragement*

**Revisit Galatians 5:16-24.** *What truth can you see from your meditation on this passage that God might give for you to encourage another person with today? Ask God to help you see this person the way he sees them. What word, phrase, or image comes to mind? Is there a specific idea you can take to them as an encouragement? Check your encouragement against Scripture and consider sharing it with that person.*



*May the God who gives  
endurance and  
encouragement give you  
the same attitude of  
mind toward each other  
that Christ Jesus had.*

ROMANS 15:5