

SEASON 01

SEPT 2023

BECOMING
HEARTSTRONG

Matthew - Acts



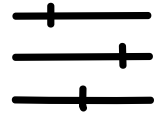


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Gather Grow Go



We invite you to honestly reflect on how you are following Jesus alongside others in this season of life. To do so, we hope you honestly answer our More Like Jesus questions. Share your results with someone you trust or your Heartstrong Group. The heart isn't to overthink but to pause and reflect upon how you are actively following Jesus.

Where do you believe you are actively following Jesus using our Gather, Grow, and Go self-assessment questions? One is non-existent, and ten is wholeheartedly engaged.

In Each Season, Become More Like Jesus.

GATHER for weekly worship. How often did I attend church? While present, was I engaged?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

GROW by investing in my lifelong spiritual formation with others. Do I belong to a Life or Heartstrong Group? Bible School? Am I being confessional? Encouraging? Fostering emotionally healthy, life-giving relationships?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

GO make a Jesus-sized difference in the world. How am I actively serving in the church and city?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Share your assessment with someone you trust.



Becoming **HEARTSTRONG**

Our 2023-24 Ministry Year shared adventure will take us through the entire New Testament before rounding the turn toward the Torah. In addition, our partnership with Practicing the Way will see us dive deeply into the spiritual practices of sabbath, fasting, and prayer.

Becoming Heartstrong is both daily online and weekly in our LifeGroups. We desire to see an increase in the number of LifeGroups, period; but also each LifeGroup using our Becoming Heartstrong material.



SEPT-NOV

SEASON ONE

Bible Reading: Matthew - Acts

Spiritual Practice: Sabbath



JAN - MAR

SEASON TWO

Bible Reading: Romans - Revelation

Spiritual Practice: Prayer



APR-JUN

SEASON THREE

Bible Reading: Genesis - Leviticus

Spiritual Practice: Fasting



Worship: The Call To Be

As followers of Jesus, our doing flows from our being. For the health of our souls, it is not best not to reverse this order. Life will often pull you to reverse this order, but the power of the Holy Spirit, coupled with your spiritual disciplines, is essential to hold your heart in Jesus.

A simple analogy to hold, which we learned from Terry Walling, is as follows. Think of yourself as a railcar running along two tracks. Track A is called Being; this is our inner life: the track where God is at work in you, creating your inner Christ-like character. It is the place where Jesus is actively forming you. It is a contested space with plenty of other influences that seek to begin or keep you deformed or formed to another other than Christ.

Track B is called Doing: This is where we serve using our spiritual gifts, acquired skills, knowledge, and natural abilities. This is what others see us doing (or not doing). In the track where God works through you, evident by how you serve and minister to others; the temptation is to live exclusively from this track. For a railcar to run effectively, it requires contact on both tracks to reach its desired destination. At the end of our lives, we each wish to hear Jesus say, "Well done, good and faithful servant," this is our desired destination. To run well requires both being and doing.



This season, in our partnership with Practicing the Way, we invite you into a deeper Call to Be through developing the spiritual practice of the Sabbath.

Should you choose to engage, what can you expect? Sabbath has four session videos, weekly exercises and readings, and additional resources to help your LifeGroup create life-changing daily rhythms as you apprentice under Jesus. Transformation happens in community. Running the practice of Sabbath together looks like setting a time each week to gather with a LifeGroup and share a meal, watch the session video, and then discuss, reflect, and pray.

Start small. Using the Sabbath Companion Guide, you'll practice Sabbath through the weekly exercises and have a chance to dive deeper through the assigned readings and podcast episodes. The following week, you'll reflect on how it went. The goal is growth, not perfection.



Way

Each season we select a specific Spiritual Practice to do together. Season One is Sabbath. A twenty-four-hour time period is set aside to stop, rest, delight, and worship.

Access the Sabbath Companion Guide, containing weekly exercises, readings, and resources to help your group create life-changing daily rhythms as you apprentice under Jesus together.



Worship

You were made for worship.

We believe a lifelong adventure in following Jesus is precisely how your heart is formed to be consistently made strong in Christ.

This season we will lead you through The Call To Be, a Spiritual Discipline of Sabbath, and teach Matthew - Acts from God's Word.

Finally, we hope you answer our More Like Jesus questions honestly. Share your results with someone you trust or your Group.

Word

This season we will lead you through Matthew - Acts. We typically use the ESV as a Bible translation but feel free to use whichever translation you like best.

On the concluding page of this plan, there are links for excellent Bible reading apps we utilize and fully recommend.



[Download](#)
[Sabbath](#)
[Companion](#)
[Guide](#)

Own/Others

HEARTSTRONG

To assist you in growing in Christ-like maturity, building upon examples from Christian history, we have curated a structure for you to utilize on your own and with others.

Daily, you can use the STRONG system to spend time with God. In Groups, you can use the HEART questions to go deeper together.



STRONG (Own)

See. See your day with God's eyes, not merely your own.
Thank. Thank God for your day: each day is a gift
Review. Review your completed day with the Holy Spirit.
Own. Own your sin/shortcomings: Repent and Confess.
Need. Need God's presence to be in your day. Invite Him.
Give. Give grace to yourself and others.



HEART (Others)

Honest. What known sins have I committed?
Express. Where am I currently being tempted?
Ask. Ask God's grace to cover me and truth to set me free.
Realize. Where is God at work setting you free?
Truth. Is there anywhere I have lied today?



Heartstrong

OVERVIEW:
BOOKS OF THE BIBLE



Becoming Heartstrong

Matthew

"Matthew's gospel presents Jesus in a rich, many-sided way. He appears as the Messiah of Israel, the King who will rule and save the world. He comes before us as the Teacher, greater even than Moses. And, of course, He is presented as the Son of Man, giving His life for all of us. Matthew lays it all out step by step and invites us to learn the wisdom of the Gospel message and the new way that results from it."

-Tom Wright.

Jesus: Our Promised King

Content

The story of Jesus, including large blocks of teaching, from the announcement of His birth to the commissioning of the disciples to make disciples of the Gentiles.

Author, Date, Recipients, & Emphasis

Papias (ca. A.D. 125) attributes "the first Gospel" to the apostle Matthew; scholarship is divided. The date is unknown (since he used Mark, very likely written in the (70's or 80's). The recipients are almost certainly Jewish Christians committed to the Gentile mission, most commonly thought to have lived in and around Antioch of Syria.

The emphasis: Jesus is the Son of God, the (messianic) King of the Jews; Jesus is God present with us in miraculous power; Jesus is the church's Lord; the teaching of Jesus has continuing importance for God's people; the gospel of the kingdom is for all peoples - Jew and Gentile alike.



Becoming Heartstrong

Mark

"Mark's gospel is the shortest and sharpest of the stories about Jesus. Many people think Mark's gospel was the first to be written, and certainly, it has all the zip and punch of a quick, hasty story that's meant to grab you by the collar and make you face the truth about Jesus, about God, and yourself." - Tom Wright.

Jesus: Our True God

Content

The story of Jesus from His baptism to His resurrection, about two-thirds of which tells of His ministry in Galilee, while the last third narrates His final week in Jerusalem.

Author, Date, Recipients, & Emphasis

The author: anonymous; attributed (by Papias, ca. A.D. 125) to John Mark, a sometime companion of Paul (Col 4:10) and later of Peter (1 Pet 5:13). The date: ca. A.D. 65 (according to Papias, soon after the deaths of Paul and Peter in Rome). The recipients: the church in Rome (according to Papias), which accounts for its preservation along with the longer Matthew and Luke.

The emphasis would be the time of God's rule (the kingdom of God) has come with Jesus; Jesus has brought about the new exodus promised in Isaiah; the kingly Messiah came in weakness, His identity a secret except to those to whom it is revealed; the way of the new exodus leads to Jesus' death in Jerusalem; the way of discipleship is to take up a cross and follow him.



Becoming Heartstrong

Luke

"Luke's gospel opens up one of the most brilliant writings in early Christianity. Luke tells us that he had had a chance to stand back from the extraordinary events that had been going on, to talk to the people involved, to read some earlier writings, and to make his own quite full version so that readers could know the truth about the things to do with Jesus. He was educated and cultured, the first real historian to write about Jesus. His book places Jesus not only at the heart of the Jewish world of the first century but at the heart of the Roman world into which the Christian gospel exploded and which it was destined to change so radically." - Tom Wright.

Jesus: Our Continued Mission

Content

The story of Jesus as part 1 of Luke/Acts is the story of the salvation of "Israel," which Christ and the Spirit have brought about. It begins with the announcement of Jesus' birth by the Spirit and carries through to the ascension.

Author, Date, Recipients, & Emphasis

According to very early tradition, Luke was the physician and sometime companion of the apostle Paul (see Col. 4:14) and the only Gentile author in the Bible. The date: scholars are divided between a date believed before the death of Paul (ca. A.D. 64; see Acts 28:30-31) and after the fall of Jerusalem (A.D. 70). The recipients are implied to be readers as Gentile Christians.

The emphasis: God's Messiah has come to His people with the promised inclusion of Gentiles; Jesus came to save the lost, including every kind of marginalized person whom traditional religion would put outside the boundaries; Jesus' ministry is carried out under the power of the Holy Spirit; the necessity of Jesus' death and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins.



Becoming Heartstrong

John

"John's gospel has always been a favourite for many. At one level, it is the simplest of all the gospels; at another level, it is the most profound. It gives the appearance of being written by someone who was a very close friend of Jesus, and who spent the rest of his life mulling over, more and more deeply, what Jesus had done and said and achieved, praying it through from every angle, and helping others to understand it.." - Tom Wright.

Jesus: Our Great I Am

Content

The story of Jesus, Messiah and Son of God, told from the perspective of post-resurrection insights; in His incarnation, Jesus made God known and made His life available to all through the cross.

Author, Date, Recipients, & Emphasis

The beloved disciple who "wrote [these things] down" (21:24; cf. 13:23; 19:25-27; 20:2; 21:7) most likely refers to John the apostle, son of Zebedee (otherwise not named in this Gospel); the "we" of 21:24 suggests another person is responsible for the Gospel in its final form. The date: unknown; probably ca. A.D. 90-95. The recipients: see 1 John, to which this Gospel is closely related.

The emphasis: Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God; in His incarnation and the crucifixion, He both revealed God's love and redeemed humanity; discipleship means to "remain in the vine" (Jesus) and to bear fruit (to love as He loved; the Holy Spirit will be given to His people to continue His work.



Becoming Heartstrong

Acts

"The book of Acts is full of the energy and excitement of the early Christians as they found God doing new things all over the place and learned to take the good news of Jesus around the world. It's also full of the puzzles and problems that churches faced then and face today - crises over leadership, money, ethnic divisions, theology, and ethics, not to mention serious clashes with political and religious authorities. It's comforting to know that church life, even in the time of the first apostles, was neither trouble-free nor plain sailing, just as it's encouraging to know that even amid all their difficulties, the early church could take the gospel forward in such dynamic ways. There isn't a dull page in Acts. But, equally importantly, the whole book reminds us that whatever journey we are making in our own lives, our spirituality, our following of Jesus, and our work for his kingdom, his spirit will guide us too, and make us fruitful in his service." - Tom Wright.

Jesus: Our Gracious Saviour

Content

Acts can also be thought of as Part 2 of Luke's account of the good news about Jesus; how by the power of the Spirit, the good news spread from Jerusalem to Rome.

Author, Date, Recipients, & Emphasis

According to very early tradition, Luke was the physician and sometime companion of the apostle Paul (see Col 4:14. the only Gentile author in the Bible. The date: scholars are divided between a date believed before the death of Paul (ca. A.D. 64; see Acts 28:30-31) and after the fall of Jerusalem (A.D. 70). The recipients are implied to be Gentile Christians.

The emphasis: The good news of God's salvation through Jesus is for Jew and Gentile alike, thus fulfilling Old Testament expectations; the Holy Spirit guides the church in spreading the good news; the church has the good sense to side with God regarding His salvation, and the inclusion of the Gentiles, salvation for all is God's thing, and nothing can hinder it; the good news is accepted in joy by some and rejected in anger by others.



Heartstrong

WEEKLY
BIBLE READING PLAN





Word: September

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4 Labour Day	5	6	7	8	9
10 Sabbath	11 Matt 1	12 Matt 2-3	13 Matt 4-5	14 Matt 6-7	15 Matt 8-9	16
17 Sabbath	18 Matt 10-11	19 Matt 12-13	20 Matt 14-15	21 Matt 16-17	22 Matt 18-19	23
24 Sabbath	25 Matt 20-21	26 Matt 22-23	27 Matt 24-25	28 Matt 26-27	29 Matt 28 Mark 1	30 Truth and Reconciliation Day



Memorize: Bible Passage

"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." Matthew 6:33-34 (ESV)



Word: October

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1 Sabbath	2 Mark 2-3	3 Mark 4-5	4 Mark 6-7	5 Mark 8-9	6 Mark 10-11	7
8 Sabbath	9 Thanksgiving Mark 12-13	10 Mark 14-15	11 Mark 16 Luke 1	12 Luke 2-3	13 Luke 4-5	14
15 Sabbath	16 Luke 6-7	17 Luke 8-9	18 Luke 10-11	19 Luke 12-13	20 Luke 14-15	21
22 Sabbath	23 Luke 16-17	24 Luke 18-19	25 Luke 20-21	26 Luke 22-23	27 Luke 24 John 1	28
29 Sabbath	30 John 2-3	31 John 4-5				

Memorize: Bible Passage

Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." Mark 12:29-31 (ESV)



Word: November

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
			1 John 6-7	2 John 8-9	3 John 10-11	4
5 Sabbath	6 John 12-13	7 John 14-15	8 John 16-17	9 John 18-19	10 John 20-21	11 Remembrance Day
12 Sabbath	13 Acts 1-2	14 Acts 3-4	15 Acts 5-6	16 Acts 7-8	17 Acts 9-10	18
19 Sabbath	20 Acts 11-12	21 Acts 13-14	22 Acts 15-16	23 Acts 17-18	24 Acts 19-20	25
26 Sabbath	27 Acts 21-22	28 Acts 23-24	29 Acts 25-26	30 Acts 27-28		

Memorize: Bible Passage

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Acts 1:8 (ESV)

Heartstrong Group

WEEKLY
DISCUSSION GUIDE



Becoming Heartstrong

WEEK ONE: DISCUSSION GUIDE

You were made for worship. We believe a lifelong adventure in following Jesus is precisely how your heart is formed to be consistently made strong in Christ. This season we will lead you through The Call To Be, a Spiritual Discipline of Sabbath, and teach Matthew - Acts from God's Word.

Bible Reading

Read: Matthew Chapters 1-9

Spiritual Practice: Sabbath

"Because it's so easy to lose sight of the end goal of a Practice, here are a few tips to keep in mind as you sabbath. Tip 1 Start small. Start where you are, not where you "should" be. If a full 24 hours is too much, start with a half-day; if that's too much, start with a few hours." - Practicing the Way

Download: [Sabbath Companion Guide](#)

Five Points of Discussion

During this season, we invite all LifeGroups to ask questions based on our Sunday teachings and also around our Spiritual Practice, which during Season One is Sabbath.

1. As you read Matthew 1-9 and listened to the Sunday teaching, what did the Holy Spirit speak to you about?
2. Why would Jesus set us up to fail?
3. Why would Jesus create such a high standard that we could not achieve?
4. Is Jesus ever unloving or unkind towards us?
5. In Matthew 7, there are a series of contrasts: narrow and wide gates; true and false prophets; true and false disciples; wise and foolish builders. As Group, draw out how Jesus classifies one group from another. Then honestly share if your life is found to be more on the narrow, true, & wise or the wide, false, & foolish side of the equation.

In Groups, there are those starting to follow Jesus. Take time weekly to Start an essential conversation about some of the questions people have about all things following Jesus.



Becoming Heartstrong

WEEK ONE: DISCUSSION GUIDE

Whether you are exploring a newfound faith or have been a follower of Jesus for a long time, Start is something that will add value to your life. No matter where you have come from or what you have done, the Bible tells us that we have all fallen short and there is nothing we can do through our good deeds to earn God's love. Yet God, through His unfailing grace, has freely given His love to each of us.

START ONE: Bible

Each of us has a story, a collection of memories, experiences and dynamics that make our lives what they are today. Stories are powerful, and whether found in songs, books or movies, they are timeless and profoundly captivate the human heart. The Bible is the story of Jesus and His gift of salvation to all of mankind, and reading it helps us discover how our story is connected to His story.

Whenever the idea of God is mentioned, often a discussion about the Bible is soon to follow. The Bible is the compass that directs the beliefs of followers of Christ. It is sixty-six books contained in one volume. Thirty-nine books comprise the Old Testament, and twenty-seven comprise the New Testament. More than forty authors writing over a thousand years, most of who never knew each other, penned a consistent theme of the heart of a loving God working to restore all of mankind to a relationship with Him.

The Bible is more than a book about history, adventure, rebellion, violence and romance. For some, there is a deep mistrust of the Bible. Some people point to what they see as inconsistencies found throughout it. Others feel that Scripture contradicts the apparent laws of science. You may or may not believe it to be God's Word, and you may have valid concerns, yet the larger issue is not to see if you can be convinced to trust in the Bible but whether you will open your heart to its Author.

In John 10:10 (ESV), Jesus explains why He came to earth, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." The primary way God will speak to you is through the Bible. God also wants to tell His love story through your life to those who are lost and broken.

Reflection & Discussion Questions

1. What has been your exposure to the Bible growing up?
2. Why do you think God gave us the Bible?
3. Read: John 10:10-18. What do you think it means to have abundant life?
4. If you had abundant life like Jesus talks about in John 10:10, what would life be like?

[Watch: The Bible Projects What Is the Bible?](#)



Becoming Heartstrong

WEEK TWO: DISCUSSION GUIDE

You were made for worship. We believe a lifelong adventure in following Jesus is precisely how your heart is formed to be consistently made strong in Christ. This season we will lead you through The Call To Be, a Spiritual Discipline of Sabbath, and teach Matthew - Acts from God's Word.

Bible Reading

Read: Matthew Chapters 10-19

Spiritual Practice: Sabbath

"Because it's so easy to lose sight of the end goal of a Practice, here are a few tips to keep in mind as you sabbath. Tip 2 Think subtraction, not addition. Please do not "add" Sabbath into your already overbusy, overfull life. Think: what can I cut out? A weekend sports team? A house project? Weekend emails? Formation is about less, not more." - Practicing the Way

Download: [Sabbath Companion Guide](#)

Five Points of Discussion

During this season, we invite all LifeGroups to ask questions based on our Sunday teachings and also around our Spiritual Practice, which during Season One is Sabbath.

1. As you read Matthew 10-19 and listened to the Sunday teaching, what did the Holy Spirit speak to you about?
2. What is your current assignment from God? (Hint: What is in your hands to steward)
3. Where have you added to what God has given you? Living someone else's dream?
4. Where and with whom do you have supernatural grace?
5. If rejected, are you ok to trust God enough to walk, not turn away?

In Groups, there are those starting to follow Jesus. Take time weekly to Start an essential conversation about some of the questions people have about all things following Jesus.



Becoming Heartstrong

WEEK TWO: DISCUSSION GUIDE

Whether you are exploring a newfound faith or have been a follower of Jesus for a long time, Start is something that will add value to your life. No matter where you have come from or what you have done, the Bible tells us that we have all fallen short and there is nothing we can do through our good deeds to earn God's love. Yet God, through His unfailing grace, has freely given His love to each of us.

START TWO: Bible

This may be a leap of faith, but let's assume that you believe in God and that He chose to use the Bible to reveal His heart to draw you to Himself. Where would you begin to read if you picked it up? Even better yet, how would you begin to read it? There are two mindsets in which people have commonly read the Bible. Some see the Bible as principles to live by, and others read it as a way to find freedom and power.

Some read Scripture to learn its principles for their lives. Proverbs is a unique book of the Bible that does not require a lot of context. It is full of great principles for living your life. The Bible speaks on forgiveness, faith, leadership, wisdom, finances, government, worry, stress, and even taxes. Principles are great because they are impartial; they are gender and colour neutral. A principle cannot discern if you are male or female, rich or poor, black or white, Christian or agnostic. Like the law of gravity, they are what they are. Many people view the Bible through the lens of acquiring principles to live a successful life. But if we only view Scripture as the application of principles, then we reduce it to another self-help book. Principles have their place, but reading the Bible just for life principles is not the heart of why we are to read Scripture.

Others read Scripture to uncover its power in their lives. If you were to read through the Bible, you would quickly discover that it is full of miraculous moments. In the Old Testament, you would read about Moses and how God parted the Red Sea or about Joshua and how marching around walls caused them to fall. In the New Testament, you would read about seas becoming still or Jesus raising a man named Lazarus from the dead. Scripture is full of genuine accounts of God's power being made known in the lives of ordinary men and women, setting them free from whatever is holding them back. Just like principles, powerful moments have their place in history and our lives, but reading Scripture to acquire power is also not the only reason we are to read Scripture.

Reflection & Discussion Questions

1. Do you believe the Bible is true? Why or Why not?
2. How will the Bible help you grow in your relationship with Jesus?
3. Would you consider reading the Bible regularly for the next ten weeks?



Becoming Heartstrong

WEEK THREE: DISCUSSION GUIDE

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Bible Reading

Read: Matthew Chapter 20 - Mark 1

Spiritual Practice: Sabbath

"Because it's so easy to lose sight of the end goal of a Practice, here are a few tips to keep in mind as you sabbath. Tip 3 You get out what you put in. The more fully you give yourself to this Practice, the more life-changing it will be. The more you just dabble with it, the more shortcuts you take, the less of an effect it will have on your transformation." - Practicing the Way

Download: [Sabbath Companion Guide](#)

Five Points of Discussion

During this season, we invite all LifeGroups to ask questions based on our Sunday teachings and also around our Spiritual Practice, which during Season One is Sabbath.

1. As you read Matthew 20 to Mark 1 and listened to the Sunday teaching, what did the Holy Spirit speak to you about?
2. Where would you say you struggle most if there is inconsistency in your life?
3. Reading all the seven "woes" which of them do you see most often and concern you the most?
4. Why do you think Jesus seems more concerned about us taking heaven in vain than hell?
5. How are you working on being one who not only tells others what to do but does their best to set an example so their words and actions hold the smallest of gaps?

In Groups, there are those starting to follow Jesus. Take time weekly to Start an essential conversation about some of the questions people have about all things following Jesus.



Becoming Heartstrong

WEEK THREE: DISCUSSION GUIDE

Whether you are exploring a newfound faith or have been a follower of Jesus for a long time, Start is something that will add value to your life. No matter where you have come from or what you have done, the Bible tells us that we have all fallen short and there is nothing we can do through our good deeds to earn God's love. Yet God, through His unfailing grace, has freely given His love to each of us.

START THREE: Bible

The purpose of diving into Scripture is not only rooted in principles or power but in something altogether different. The Bible is sixty-six books, with forty authors telling one story about a loving God desiring to be in a relationship with YOU. We read Scripture to know God, to understand God and to serve God. This leads us to engage with our lost and broken world, sharing God's love expressed through us.

We read the Bible to grow in a relationship with God – it is personal to you and God. Reading the Bible leads to hearing; hearing leads to understanding, understanding leads to accepting and accepting leads to transformation. As you read your Bible, allow God to transform your life as you become more like Him.

Over time, small investments of time in reading your Bible will ground your life in a relationship with God. Develop this discipline in a guilt-free environment. If you miss a day, don't sweat it; pick up where you left off the next day. Never let someone else's reading intimidate you. Learn from others, but remember this is personal to you and God.

Bring your Bible to church each week. While the Scriptures will often appear on the screen, it is better to follow in your Bible or on your mobile device. Highlighting the verses read on Sunday or taking notes on paper can help you remember the teaching for future reference.

Instead of a discussion, this week, let's practice reading and discussing the Bible itself.

Reflection & Discussion Questions

Read Matthew 5:14-16

1. What do you think Jesus meant by followers of Jesus being the light of the world?
2. Where in your life do you need guidance?

Take a few moments to pray, not for God to change your surroundings or situation, but for your next step. Ask Him to dispel any darkness and light your way.



Becoming Heartstrong

WEEK FOUR: DISCUSSION GUIDE

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Bible Reading

Read: Mark Chapters 2-11

Spiritual Practice: Sabbath

"Because it's so easy to lose sight of the end goal of a Practice, here are a few tips to keep in mind as you sabbath. Tip 4 Remember the J-curve. Learning experts tell us that whenever we set out to master a new skill, it tends to follow a J-shaped curve; we tend to get worse before we get better. If you currently enjoy your Sunday routine or day off, don't be surprised if your first few Sabbaths are awkward and difficult. Just stay with the Practice; you will come around." - Practicing the Way

Download: [Sabbath Companion Guide](#)

Five Points of Discussion

During this season, we invite all LifeGroups to ask questions based on our Sunday teachings and also around our Spiritual Practice, which during Season One is Sabbath.

1. As you read Mark 2-11 and listened to the Sunday teaching, what did the Holy Spirit speak to you about?
2. What is the good news? Is what you believe and share about Jesus good for others?
3. How do you honour the past (people, events, circumstances) in your life?
4. Would your life clear the way or clutter others' ability to see Jesus clearly?
5. How do you not allow everything in life (money, relationships, failure, status) to drive your heart, life, or ambition? How do you keep Jesus central?

Bonus: Share how you believe you are unique from others.

In Groups, there are those starting to follow Jesus. Take time weekly to Start an essential conversation about some of the questions people have about all things following Jesus.



Becoming Heartstrong

WEEK FOUR: DISCUSSION GUIDE

Whether you are exploring a newfound faith or have been a follower of Jesus for a long time, Start is something that will add value to your life. No matter where you have come from or what you have done, the Bible tells us that we have all fallen short and there is nothing we can do through our good deeds to earn God's love. Yet God, through His unfailing grace, has freely given His love to each of us.

START FOUR: GRACE

It seems that most of us are far more comfortable with the idea of living in a world without grace than with it. When you think about it, "You get what you pay for" or "What goes around, comes around" is something that most of us believe to be true. Even Christians (although they may never admit it) tend to live their lives through the concept of karma, not grace.

Grace changes everything. At the heart of grace is the reality of meritless salvation. There is nothing within ourselves or our means that we can do to merit salvation. As sinful people, surrendering our lives to Jesus means we receive salvation instead of what we deserve; we receive grace.

Read: Ephesians 2:8-10

Have you ever really thought that no matter how hard we try, we are utterly unable to earn our salvation? Embracing God's gift of grace into our lives is a beautiful, heart-shaken humility. Andy Stanley writes about grace in this fashion: "While our many offences warrant full condemnation for our sins, God offers to pay the penalty Himself. In Jesus, God became flesh, lived a sinless life, and sacrificed Himself on a cruel Roman cross. Through the person of Christ, God has posted a full bond on our behalf. We're set free to live the life we were created for."

When it comes to a relationship with God, grace changes everything.

Reflection & Discussion Questions

1. Share a story of grace.
2. Why is it hard to extend grace to others and to receive grace ourselves?
3. Think about an outstanding debt you may have. How would you feel if grace was extended to cover that debt?

[Watch: The Bible Project Sacrifice and Atonement](#)



Becoming Heartstrong

WEEK FIVE: DISCUSSION GUIDE

You were made for worship. We believe a lifelong adventure in following Jesus is precisely how your heart is formed to be consistently made strong in Christ. This season we will lead you through The Call To Be, a Spiritual Discipline of Sabbath, and teach Matthew - Acts from God's Word.

Bible Reading

Read: Mark Chapters 12 - Luke 5

Spiritual Practice: Sabbath

"Because it's so easy to lose sight of the end goal of a Practice, here are a few tips to keep in mind as you sabbath. Tip 5 there is no formation without repetition. Spiritual formation is slow, deep, cumulative work that takes years, not weeks. This experience aims to get you started on a journey of a lifetime. Upon completing this Practice, you will have a map for the journey ahead and hopefully some possible companions for the Way." - Practicing the Way

Download: [Sabbath Companion Guide](#)

Five Points of Discussion

During this season, we invite all LifeGroups to ask questions based on our Sunday teachings and also around our Spiritual Practice, which during Season One is Sabbath.

1. As you read Mark 12-Luke 5 and listened to the Sunday teaching, what did the Holy Spirit speak to you?
2. Have you ever experienced an end to a relationship, event, or circumstance you wish would have gone differently? Share. What did you learn?
3. While an ending isn't possible to change, how might God still be at work - even in the endings we don't enjoy or prefer?
4. Share an experience where you have witnessed God's Word being quoted correctly but used or applied incorrectly or in a fashion it was not intended. How big a deal is this to God?
5. Why do you think some who are knowledgeable or religious sometimes become unloving towards others? In church how do we prevent this from happening?

In Groups, there are those starting to follow Jesus. Take time weekly to Start an essential conversation about some of the questions people have about all things following Jesus.



Becoming Heartstrong

WEEK FIVE: DISCUSSION GUIDE

Whether you are exploring a newfound faith or have been a follower of Jesus for a long time, Start is something that will add value to your life. No matter where you have come from or what you have done, the Bible tells us that we have all fallen short and there is nothing we can do through our good deeds to earn God's love. Yet God, through His unfailing grace, has freely given His love to each of us.

START FIVE: GRACE

Grace is what distinguishes Christianity from all other religions. If you were to do a comparative study of world religions and beliefs, you would discover that many have quite similar aspects.

However, what Jesus taught and did is what makes being a follower of Christ absolutely different from all the rest.

In Starting Point, written by North Point Church, this difference is described as follows: "God's plan for humanity, which started with a promise to Abraham, reached its height in the death and resurrection of Christ. Jesus was not only the Messiah of Israel but the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. This is why His early followers asserted that Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12). Either Jesus is the only way, the truth, and the life, or He isn't. Therefore, to dismiss or decline His offer of grace is to reject Him altogether."

Some would say religion is simply mankind's attempt to reconcile themselves with God. All religions, including Christianity, can fall prey to moving from grace into earning or some form of works-based, performance-driven faith to earn God's approval. As Dallas Willard says, "Grace is not opposed to effort, but to earning."

The heart of the Gospel is completed in Christ and rooted in grace.

Read: Matthew 18:21-35

Reflection & Discussion Questions

1. What stands out to you in the story of the servant?
2. How does this story relate to what Christ has done for us?



Becoming Heartstrong

WEEK SIX: DISCUSSION GUIDE

You were made for worship. We believe a lifelong adventure in following Jesus is precisely how your heart is formed to be consistently made strong in Christ. This season we will lead you through The Call To Be, a Spiritual Discipline of Sabbath, and teach Matthew - Acts from God's Word.

Bible Reading

Read: Luke Chapters 6-15

Spiritual Practice: Sabbath

"Pick a time to sabbath, and give it a try. There are three basic options.

- 1. The Christian Sabbath on Sunday, which is best for most of us since it's also our day of worship.*
- 2. The traditional Sabbath from sundown on Friday night to the same time on Saturday.*
- 3. The midweek Sabbath for those with non-traditional work schedules.." - Practicing the Way*

Download: [Sabbath Companion Guide](#)

Five Points of Discussion

During this season, we invite all LifeGroups to ask questions based on our Sunday teachings and also around our Spiritual Practice, which during Season One is Sabbath.

1. As you read Luke 6-15 and listened to the Sunday teaching, what did the Holy Spirit speak to you?
2. How would you define how you understand faith? Share.
3. Share a circumstance or a time when your faith was tested. How did you respond?
4. Is it easy or difficult to trust that Jesus sees you, even in times of hardship?
5. How do you keep your faith anchored in Jesus? If it shifts, where does it go most often?

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Becoming Heartstrong

WEEK SIX: DISCUSSION GUIDE

Whether you are exploring a newfound faith or have been a follower of Jesus for a long time, Start is something that will add value to your life. No matter where you have come from or what you have done, the Bible tells us that we have all fallen short and there is nothing we can do through our good deeds to earn God's love. Yet God, through His unfailing grace, has freely given His love to each of us.

START SIX: GRACE

To embrace God's grace in our lives requires real humility. Imagine, just for a moment, if grace was not offered but rather a sliding scale of goodness in its place. To ponder this does not take much of a stretch as most of our lives in today's culture are based on this notion. You are good enough to get the job, or you are not. You are strong enough to win, or you are not.

Earning and performance are the currency of our culture. Imagine if it was the same with God. That there was an arbitrary sliding scale of goodness that granted you a relationship with God and access to eternity. How frightening would it be to find yourself standing in line in heaven between Dr. Martin Luther King Jr and Mother Theresa to see if you were good enough for God? Suddenly, your goodness might pale in comparison to theirs.

But grace changes everything. Grace removes the performance, the sliding scale, and the ultimate worry of rejection. Grace says that God loves us and gave us Jesus, and if we believe in Him, we receive new life. Why?

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." John 3:16-17 (ESV)

God's love is found in His offer of grace. Grace changes everything.

Reflection & Discussion Questions

1. Have you allowed God's grace to change you?
2. If religion is our attempt to reconcile with God, how does religion differ from a grace-given relationship with God?
3. Can you relate to the struggle of not feeling good enough for God?



Becoming Heartstrong

WEEK SEVEN: DISCUSSION GUIDE

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Bible Reading

Read: Luke Chapters 16-John 1

Spiritual Practice: Sabbath

"Prepare for internal resistance. The following is a simple journaling exercise for you to do during your upcoming Sabbath. Find a quiet, distraction-free place and time to breathe and come to rest in God. Then follow these prayer prompts: Invite the Holy Spirit to come and illuminate your mind. Then ask these two simple questions: What am I feeling today? And What attachment is under that feeling?"
- Practicing the Way

Download: [Sabbath Companion Guide](#)

Five Points of Discussion

During this season, we invite all LifeGroups to ask questions based on our Sunday teachings and also around our Spiritual Practice, which during Season One is Sabbath.

1. As you read Luke 16-John 1 and listened to the Sunday teaching, what did the Holy Spirit speak to you?
2. Does being vindicated affect your perception of justice & fairness? Asked slightly differently, How does being vindicated impact your view of justice & fairness?
3. How might you be exalting yourself? How may you trust in yourself rather than in God? Explain.
4. Can God's Word read you or your situation accurately? Do you trust God is good, even when you fall short, or life doesn't seem to go your way? Share.
5. Share what vulnerable group of people in the world who, when they are taken advantage of, your righteous (and sometimes even unrighteous anger) burns real hot.

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Becoming Heartstrong

WEEK SEVEN: DISCUSSION GUIDE

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START SEVEN: PRAYER

One of the most fruitful questions Jesus answered for His disciples was how to pray (Luke 11). It is important to note that the disciples did not ask Jesus about the importance of prayer, or how many times to pray in a day, but how to pray. There is more than one type of prayer: personal prayer, intercessory prayer, and corporate prayer are a few examples. Today we will be focusing on personal prayer. Personal prayer is your individual relationship with God when no one else is around. Just you and God. How is that for personal?

Read Matthew 6:5-15. When it comes to prayer, there are ways to approach it that can virtually suck the life right out of it. Here are some common prayer struggles:

- a. Trying to impress God with our spirituality.
- b. Trying to follow a formula.
- c. Trying to stay balanced between worshiping God and asking God to do things for you.
- d. Trying to listen to God's voice but never knowing how to really hear Him speak.

Do you notice a common trait? Always TRYING to do something. In other words, they are always trying to perform for God in some way, shape, or form. In personal prayer, many people never feel a sense of delight or freedom; instead, they feel like they must be doing it wrong or simply not well enough. Prayer tips and formulas can unintentionally move us from an authentic to an impersonal approach to prayer. The more we focus on doing it "right" the greater the temptation is for us to act spiritually rather than be spiritual because Christ dwells within us.

Reflection & Discussion Questions

1. What kinds of things do you pray about?
2. Do you feel intimidated to pray alone or out loud?
3. What does Jesus warn us about in Matthew 6:5-8? Why?



Becoming Heartstrong

WEEK EIGHT: DISCUSSION GUIDE

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Bible Reading

Read: John Chapters 2-11

Spiritual Practice: Sabbath

Pick a beginning and ending ritual. In a traditional Sabbath ceremony called the Kiddush, you begin by lighting candles, praying, and eating a Sabbath meal with your family and community. And you end by praying and sharing the highlight of your Sabbath. You can do exactly that, let Sunday worship with your church mark the start, or get creative—start with a picnic, bonfire, or hot bath. Let your creativity guide you. Feel free to use the companion volume Sabbath Meditations from Practicing the Way." - Practicing the Way

Download: [Sabbath Companion Guide](#)

Five Points of Discussion

During this season, we invite all LifeGroups to ask questions based on our Sunday teachings and also around our Spiritual Practice, which during Season One is Sabbath.

1. As you read John 2-11 and listened to the Sunday teaching, what did the Holy Spirit speak to you?
2. At this time, in this season, what would you say Jesus is asking of you? Explain.
3. How clear or fuzzy do you find it to hear God's voice? What other voices do you hear with less effort?
4. Do you trust Jesus has something greater to give than what He's asking from you? How would you define greater? Share a time God asked you for something, and what did He give in return?
5. On Sunday, we shared how "God is always at work long before we know where He's at work." Why do you think this is the case?

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Becoming Heartstrong

WEEK EIGHT: DISCUSSION GUIDE

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START EIGHT: PRAYER

In his book "Prayer", Phillip Yancey writes, "Sometimes I wonder if the words I use are the least important part of prayer. Who am I? And who is God? If I can answer those two questions, the words I pray recede. Prayer invites me to lower defenses and present the self that no other person fully knows to a God who already knows." God lives in and through us; therefore, He knows us better than we know ourselves. Prayer is another opportunity to connect with God personally.

So then, what is personal prayer? Personal prayer is talking to God about what is on our hearts. When we understand that God knows everything about us already, we can let go of the tendency to say the "right things" and tell Him the truth about our lives. Prayer occurs anytime we lift our hearts to God, which is the essence of personal prayer. When Jesus taught the disciples how to pray, there were three main elements to the heart of prayer:

1. It was personal
2. It was about God's sovereignty
3. It was lived out in community

In Matthew 6, when Jesus taught His disciples how to pray He started with "Our Father", which places God in the posture of our Dad. Now that is personal. The next part of His prayer focuses on the sovereignty of God. In other words, not only is God "our Father" but He also has a purpose and plan for our lives. In prayer, there is an intimacy and vulnerability coupled with a healthy sense of wonder about God. Finally, there is a community aspect to personal prayer where we are reminded of our relationships and the things that may be present in our lives or are weighing on our hearts because of various people in our lives.

Reflection & Discussion Questions

1. How long or how often should we pray?
2. Do you see God as your Father or Dad? Why or Why not?
3. How does praying build our relationship with God?



Becoming Heartstrong

WEEK NINE: DISCUSSION GUIDE

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Bible Reading

Read: John Chapters 12-21

Spiritual Practice: Sabbath

Pick one to three Sabbath activities to enter into the spirit of Sabbath. Reading the broader Sabbath literature reveals 12 common activities that fill up a traditional Sabbath. 1. Lighting the candles. 2. Blessing the children. 3. Eating a Sabbath meal. 4. Expressing gratitude. 5. Singing. 6. Worshiping with your church. 7. Walking. 8. Napping. 9. Making love to your spouse. 10. Reading, especially Scripture. 11. Spending time alone with God. 12. Spending time with family and friends in conversation and celebration." - Practicing the Way

Download: [Sabbath Companion Guide](#)

Five Points of Discussion

During this season, we invite all LifeGroups to ask questions based on our Sunday teachings and also around our Spiritual Practice, which during Season One is Sabbath.

1. As you read John 12-21 and listened to the Sunday teaching, what did the Holy Spirit speak to you?
2. If within you was a "joy tank" how full or empty would it be? Share.
3. Why do you think God prunes our lives?
4. How do you differentiate between God's pruning and the enemy's stealing?
5. Read John 15:9-10. What does it mean to abide in God's love? Share.

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Becoming Heartstrong

WEEK NINE: DISCUSSION GUIDE

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START NINE: PRAYER

Personal prayer is when we talk honestly to God, as Father, about the things in our hearts. For example, rather than go through the motions of prayer, it would be better to talk to God about your lack of desire to pray than it would be to say all the right things but not mean any of them. In prayer, not only do you talk to God about your own life, but you can talk to Him about the people in your life (perhaps a sick friend or relative, or a problem with a co-worker). This is a beautiful part of our relationship with God. When we believe God is sovereign there is a healthy expectation as we trust Him with our needs. In prayer, we should not try to control God, but always be open to being changed by Him.

As we lift our hearts to God in prayer we will find that, over time, God will continue both a transformative work in us and inspire an outward work through us. It will not be forced or fake (that isn't to say you will always want to do it), rather, God will work on your life from the inside out. Prayer is like a spiritual "workout", sometimes it feels hard to get through but the benefits are worth the investment. In 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 Paul gives us helpful instructions for living a prayer-filled life. Read: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Finally, prayer is, above all things, a conversation. Not only will you talk to God but He will speak to you. The primary way in which He speaks to you is through the Bible. He could speak through songs, sermons, thoughts, dreams, or visions. This is deeply personal but also must pass a filter or test, which is the Scriptures. God speaking to you will never violate Scripture.

Reflection & Discussion Questions

1. Read the Lord's Prayer from Matthew 6.
2. Discuss which element of it speaks to your heart.



Becoming Heartstrong

WEEK TEN: DISCUSSION GUIDE

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Bible Reading

Read: Acts Chapters 1-10

Spiritual Practice: Sabbath

"Reflection is a key component in our spiritual formation. Millennia ago, King David prayed in Psalm 139: 'Search me, God, & know my heart; test me & know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, & lead me in the way everlasting.' If you want to get the most out of this Practice, you need to do it & then reflect on it." - Practicing the Way

Download: [Sabbath Companion Guide](#)

Five Points of Discussion

During this season, we invite all LifeGroups to ask questions based on our Sunday teachings and also around our Spiritual Practice, which during Season One is Sabbath.

1. As you read Acts 1-10 and listened to the Sunday teaching, what did the Holy Spirit speak to you?
2. Why do you think God makes us wait? How do you handle waiting seasons? Share.
3. On Sunday, we shared the expression, Kingdom now, but not yet. What did that mean to you? How does this help you live in the tensions of earth and a longing for heaven on earth?
4. When God genuinely moves, why do you think some people mock it? How do you guard your heart against the cynicism about God in our world?
5. Share a time you might have failed but learned something from that failure that changed your life. How do we make sure others know that in God, failure doesn't have to be final?

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Becoming Heartstrong

WEEK TEN: DISCUSSION GUIDE

Whether you are exploring a newfound faith or have been a follower of Jesus for a long time, Start is something that will add value to your life. No matter where you have come from or what you have done, the Bible tells us that we have all fallen short and there is nothing we can do through our good deeds to earn God's love. Yet God, through His unfailing grace, has freely given His love to each of us.

START TEN: SIN

We could look at the world and for many reasons, conclude that it is broken. Take a week to watch the news, and you will see crime, disease, and injustice, daily. Add to that picture a lack of faith in our systems and in the people elected to solve those problems, and you begin to grasp that the world in which we live is a fallen and broken place.

How we identify these problems and go about addressing them reveals our belief system. Whether you are a follower of Christ or not, there is something we all share in common. We recognize that things are not as they should be, and our world requires an intervention.

Scripture paints a telling picture of why there is such brokenness in the world: it is called sin. As described in the earlier devotional on Grace, the best way to understand the meaning of the word "sin" is to think like an archer. When archers draw back the arrow and release it, the goal is to strike the target or hit the bullseye. Sin is what happens when an archer completely misses the mark.

Sin is humanity missing the mark on a micro and a macro level...

Reflection & Discussion Questions

1. Do you see rules as something to break or something to keep?
2. Why do you suppose it is easier to see sin in others than in ourselves? Read Matthew 7:12. Why are the instructions in this verse a good way to live?



Becoming Heartstrong

WEEK ELEVEN: DISCUSSION GUIDE

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Bible Reading

Read: Acts Chapters 11-20

Spiritual Practice: Sabbath

"The second movement of Sabbath—to rest. The idea of rest sounds wonderful, but rest is a radical, countercultural act of resistance to the powers and principalities of a world at war with God and his kingdom of peace. To practice Sabbath is to draw a line in the sand against all external (and internal) forces that would encroach upon your apprenticeship to Jesus and formation into his image. It's to say, 'This far you shall go, but no further.'" - Practicing the Way

Download: [Sabbath Companion Guide](#)

Five Points of Discussion

During this season, we invite all LifeGroups to ask questions based on our Sunday teachings and also around our Spiritual Practice, which during Season One is Sabbath.

1. As you read Acts 11-20 and listened to the Sunday teaching, what did the Holy Spirit speak to you?
2. How well do you wait? Share.
3. Why do you think placing our faith in a formula rather than following Jesus is dangerous?
4. Is there a particular Biblical promise you must trust by faith, as your experience is different? How do you trust, even in difference?
5. How do you deal with life when it is terribly unfair? Explain.

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Becoming Heartstrong

WEEK ELEVEN: DISCUSSION GUIDE

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START ELEVEN: SIN

Read: Genesis 3:1-13

Since that day in the garden, sin has played a role in society and our stories. In fact, the Scriptures take it one step further by declaring that no human living today is untouched by the reality of sin. When you read the story from Genesis 3, it may seem that taking a bite of a piece of fruit is a pretty small thing for God to get all bent out of shape about. It was not just about the fruit: it was about trying to be like God. Rather than trusting Him, Adam and Eve defied God's authority and began a path of rebellion instead of trust. In short, they missed the mark.

Here is the big deal about sin: at its core sin, in small or large ways, is us saying, "I reject that God knows what is best and I will do a better job at being my own god." As Andy Stanley says, "By choosing sin, we demote God and put something else in His place instead. And the brokenness that ensues reverberates throughout our lives and the lives of others."

Sin is a big deal, not just because of what we do and the consequences that follow, but what is occurring at the heart level is where our loyalty is decided. Will we choose God's ways or our own? The idea in discussing sin is not simply to agree that we are bad or broken, and then to do our best to earn our way to freedom by avoiding sin. While we can choose not to sin, we cannot avoid it entirely. An important question to consider is: do you acknowledge God as the authority of your life or will you continue to chart down a path of self-reliance and self-sufficiency?

Reflection & Discussion Questions

1. What was the sin that Adam and Eve committed in the garden in Genesis 3?
2. Read 1 John 1:8-9. What should we do with our sin according to this verse?
3. How do self-reliance and self-sufficiency lead us toward sin?



Becoming Heartstrong

WEEK TWELVE: DISCUSSION GUIDE

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Bible Reading

Read: Acts Chapters 21-28

Spiritual Practice: Sabbath

"To practice Sabbath is to draw a line in the sand against all external (and internal) forces that would encroach upon your apprenticeship to Jesus and formation into his image. It's to say, "This far you shall go, but no further." It is to defy some of the most powerful forces known to humanity as an act of non-cooperation done in love for community, for the poor, for the earth, and ultimately for God himself." - Practicing the Way

Download: [Sabbath Companion Guide](#)

Five Points of Discussion

During this season, we invite all LifeGroups to ask questions based on our Sunday teachings and also around our Spiritual Practice, which during Season One is Sabbath.

1. As you read Acts 21-28 and listened to the Sunday teaching, what did the Holy Spirit speak to you?
2. Have someone explain the heart of Sunday's teaching. Share a plank & pieces story from your life. Take a moment to pray for anyone in a planks and pieces event or circumstance.
3. Why do you believe God allows bad things to happen to us?
4. When experiencing hardship, how do you focus on God and not on what has just happened?
5. Read Psalm 55:22. Specifically speaking, how do you cast your burden on the Lord? Share.

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Becoming Heartstrong

WEEK TWELVE: DISCUSSION GUIDE

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START TWELVE: SIN

When it comes to sin, it is really easy to, as Jim Collins says, "Look out the window instead of in the mirror." It would be simple to assign blame to all "those" people, you know, the bad ones. But that is not what the Bible teaches. If we are honest, we have to consider that sinners outside of Christ are part of the problem. In our lives, this starts with us being tempted. Temptation plays on our desires - the things that we feel we deserve or want, things that are already in us. Our desires take us off course, and we miss the mark. When we miss the mark, we sin. Sin, when it is fully born, produces death in our lives. In death, relationships stop or are broken and, most importantly, our relationship with God is broken. Read: James 1:14-15

The beautiful truth is that, in Christ, God made the first move towards us. While we were still sinners, broken and dead in our relationship with Him, He died for us. The good news is that Christ has overcome the guilt and power of sin in our lives. In embracing Christ as our Saviour, we deal a death blow to the guilt of our sin before God.

There are two battles to overcoming sin. The first battle is to surrender to Christ initially, and the second battle is the life-long process of embracing freedom from sin. Simply put, there is a battle to get free and a battle to stay free. Just because you give your life to Christ does not mean temptation will cease. What giving your life to Christ means is that you are no longer "guilty" before God for your sin and that the Holy Spirit resides in you, showing you how to overcome the power of sin.

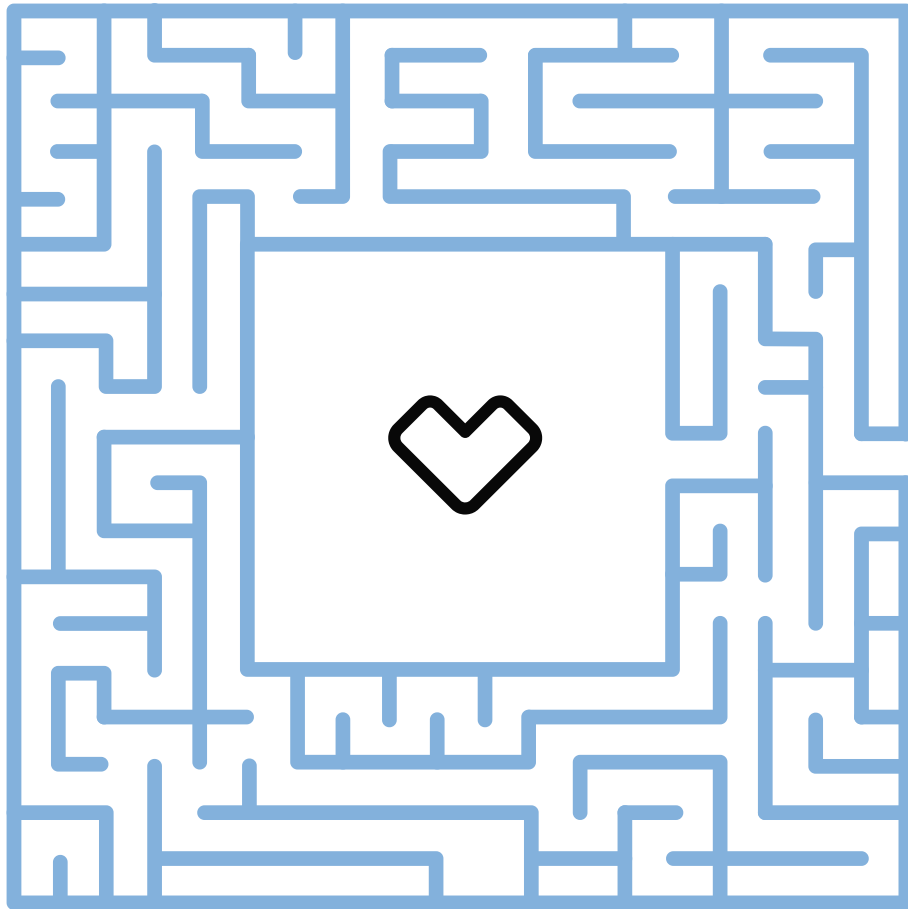
Your story in Christ will become one of hope, where you can go from brokenness to wholeness. While you will never be perfect, your life can point to the One who truly is - Christ Jesus. The world is a broken place. God working in you shows that today He is making all things new.

Reflection & Discussion Questions

1. If sin comes from within us, according to James 1:14-15, then how do we control our inner sinful desires?
2. How can comparing yourself to others hinder your freedom from sin?
3. Are you carrying a weight of sin that you are ready to give to God? Would you like prayer today?



Becoming
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The Best for This Month

Coming Up In Season Two

Word

This season we will lead you through [Romans - Revelation](#). We typically use the ESV as a Bible translation but feel free to use whichever translation you like best.

Way

Each season we select a specific Spiritual Practice to do together. Season Two is [Prayer](#). The ultimate aim of fasting is to get in touch with our hunger for God.





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November 3-4th, 2023

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\$49⁰⁰

student price

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