



the **GOSPEL**PROJECT.

# FROM MANY PEOPLE TO ONE PEOPLE

ADULTS / DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE / WINTER 2023–24 / VOL. 10



# GOD'S WORD TO YOU

## A SUMMARY OF THE BIBLE

In the beginning, the all-powerful, personal God created the universe. This God created human beings in His image to live joyfully in His presence, in humble submission to His gracious authority. But all of us have rebelled against God and, in consequence, must suffer the punishment of our rebellion: physical death and the wrath of God.

Thankfully, God initiated a rescue plan, which began with His choosing the nation of Israel to display His glory in a fallen world. The Bible describes how God acted mightily on Israel's behalf, rescuing His people from slavery and then giving them His holy law. But God's people—like all of us—failed to rightly reflect the glory of God.

Then, in the fullness of time, in the person of Jesus Christ, God Himself came to renew the world and to restore His people. Jesus perfectly obeyed the law given to Israel. Though innocent, He suffered the consequences of human rebellion by His death on a cross. But three days later, God raised Him from the dead.

Now the church of Jesus Christ has been commissioned by God to take the news of Christ's work to the world. Empowered by God's Spirit, the church calls all people everywhere to repent of sin and to trust in Christ alone for our forgiveness. By God's grace in Christ, repentance and faith restores our relationship with God and results in a life of ongoing transformation.

The Bible promises that Jesus Christ will return to this earth as the conquering King. Only those who live in repentant faith in Christ will escape God's judgment and live joyfully in God's presence for all eternity. God's message is the same to all of us: repent and believe, before it is too late. Confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe with your heart that God raised Him from the dead, and you will be saved.

# CONTENTS



SUGGESTED FOR  
THE WEEK OF

All Ages Study Plan .....	6
How to Use the Daily Discipleship Guide .....	8
7 Arrows of Bible Reading .....	10

## UNIT 28: I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS

	Introduction .....	12
Dec. 3	Session 1 <b>Scriptures Are Confirmed</b> (Luke 24) .....	16
Dec. 10	Session 2 <b>Doubts Are Overcome</b> (John 20) .....	24
Dec. 17	Session 3 <b>People Are Restored</b> (John 21) .....	32
Dec. 24	Session 4 <b>God Is Here</b> (Doctrine: God Is Immanent) .....	40

## UNIT 29: YOU WILL BE MY WITNESSES

	Introduction .....	48
Dec. 31	Session 1 <b>The Commission Received</b> (Acts 1) .....	52
Jan. 7	Session 2 <b>The Waiting Commences</b> (Acts 1) .....	60
Jan. 14	Session 3 <b>The Spirit Enables</b> (Acts 2) .....	68
Jan. 21	Session 4 <b>The Spirit Empowers</b> (Doctrine: Work of the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Christian) .....	76

## UNIT 30: EVERY DAY THE LORD ADDED TO THEIR NUMBER

	Introduction .....	84
Jan. 28	Session 1 <b>The Church Grows</b> (Acts 2) .....	88
Feb. 4	Session 2 <b>The Church Meets Needs</b> (Acts 3) .....	96
Feb. 11	Session 3 <b>The Church Stands Firm</b> (Acts 4) .....	104
Feb. 18	Session 4 <b>The Church Works Together</b> (Acts 4–5) .....	112
Feb. 25	Session 5 <b>The Church Preaches the Gospel</b> (Doctrine: Evangelism) ...	120

The Most Critical Part of Your Bible Study. Period. ....	128
References .....	130

# THE EDITOR

What extremely good news to know that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has risen, overcoming death and sin! Only Jesus has risen from the grave after three days, appearing to witnesses, commissioning His people, and ascending into heaven. Only Jesus is the way to salvation. A new kingdom has been ushered in to transform the world, as predetermined by God, fulfilling Scripture.

We call ourselves Christians and we call ourselves the church because of the crucified and risen Christ! Following in His steps, we are blessed with the promised Holy Spirit, sealing us and working in and through us, as we are sent by our Lord and Master to continue His work in sharing the good news of His sacrifice. We do so with the good gifts He has given us in joyful generosity to those around us.

We thus are privileged to share that news to anyone and everyone that comes in our path—not for the end goal of growing a movement, but for the redemption, salvation, and good of those who choose to trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

And as we form His body, the church, we show the world that we are His ambassadors, doing as He did—loving, caring, guiding, teaching, rebuking. We do this that all may know God in reverent fear and in utmost intimacy. For He is a holy God, but One who want to know us personally.

To God be the glory for His redemptive plan in history to save His people. He is so good to us in every way. May we never forget or take that for granted.

**Y Bonesteele**

Content Editor

The Gospel Project for Adults

## **The Gospel Project®**

Adult Daily Discipleship Guide  
Volume 12, Number 2 Winter 2023–24

Ed Stetzer and Trevin Wax  
Founding Editors

Daniel Davis  
Team Leader

Y Bonesteele  
Content Editor

Rachel Myrick  
Content and Production Editor

Dwayne McCrary  
Manager, Adult Ongoing Bible Studies

John Paul Basham  
Director, Adult Ministry

Ken Braddy  
Director of Sunday School

### **Send questions/comments to:**

Team Leader by email to [daniel.davis@lifeway.com](mailto:daniel.davis@lifeway.com) or mail to Team Leader, The Gospel Project: Adult Daily Discipleship Guide, 200 Powell Place, Suite 100, Brentwood, TN 37027-7707; or make comments on the web at [lifeway.com](http://lifeway.com).

Printed in the United States  
of America

The Gospel Project®: Adult Daily Discipleship Guide (ISSN 2162-7207; Item 005461524) is published quarterly by Lifeway Christian Resources, 200 Powell Place, Suite 100, Brentwood, TN 37027-7707, Ben Mandrell, President. © 2023 Lifeway Christian Resources.

**For ordering or inquiries,** visit [lifeway.com](http://lifeway.com), or write Lifeway Resources Customer Service, 200 Powell Place, Suite 100, Brentwood, TN 37027-7707. For bulk shipments mailed quarterly to one address, email [orderentry@lifeway.com](mailto:orderentry@lifeway.com), fax 615.251.5933, or write to the above address.

**We believe** that the Bible has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter and that all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. To review Lifeway's doctrinal guideline, please visit [www.lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline](http://www.lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline).

Unless otherwise stated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the Christian Standard Bible®, Copyright 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission.

# THE WRITERS

**Mike Brooks** (Unit 29 Introduction) serves as associate pastor at Hope Fellowship Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He is currently in the dissertation phase of a PhD program at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Mike and his wife, Paige, reside in Cambridge.

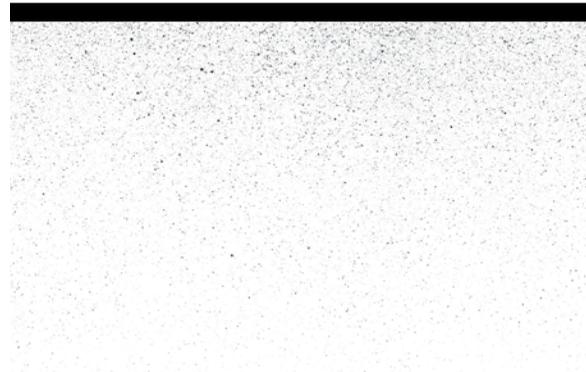
**Allyson M. Howell** (Unit 30 Introduction) is a communications associate for the Patients' Rights Action Fund. She holds an MDiv from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Allyson is a writer and editor of many topics, particularly women in the church. She is married to Randy.

**Leslie Hudson** (Unit 28, Sessions 1-4) loves her mornings of silence, coffee, and Jesus—not in that order. She lives with her husband and kids in White Bluff, Tennessee, where they raise blueberries, figs, and bees. She loves to spend her free time reading, writing, journaling, and helping others know and follow Jesus.

**Daniel Ritchie** (Unit 28 Introduction) is an evangelist, speaker, and author from Raleigh, North Carolina. He's written two books: *My Affliction for His Glory* and *Endure*. He has spoken both nationally and internationally for churches, schools, colleges, seminaries, corporations, and professional sports teams. You can visit him online at [danielritchie.com](http://danielritchie.com).

**Matt Rogers** (Unit 30, Sessions 1-5) is the pastor of Christ Fellowship Cherrydale in Greenville, South Carolina. He and his wife, Sarah, have five children: Corrie, Avery, Hudson, Willa, and Fuller. Matt is also an assistant professor of church planting at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, the church development coordinator with the Pillar Network, and a freelance author.

**Bob Wilson** (Unit 29, Sessions 1-4) is the lead pastor of First Baptist Church in Meridianville, Alabama. He and his wife, Christa, have six children.



# ALL AGES STUDY PLAN

## **VOL 1: From Creation to Chaos**

(Genesis) Fall 2021

**Unit 1:** The Heavens Declare the Glory of God (Gen. 1–2; Pss. 8; 96)

**Unit 2:** Let Us Make a Name for Ourselves (Gen. 3–11)

**Unit 3:** I Will Make Your Name Great (Gen. 11–50)

## **VOL 2: From Captivity to the Wilderness**

(Exodus–Deuteronomy) Winter 2021–22

**Unit 4:** Out of Egypt I Called My Son (Ex. 1–15)

**Unit 5:** To Dwell in the House of the Lord (Ex. 16–40; Lev.)

**Unit 6:** Be Holy, Because I Am Holy (Num. 13–14; 20–21)

## **VOL 3: From Conquest to a Kingdom**

(Joshua–1 Samuel) Spring 2022

**Unit 7:** Lord, Teach Me Your Statutes (Josh. 1; 3–4)

**Unit 8:** Fear the Lord and Worship Him (Josh. 2; 6–11; 23–24)

**Unit 9:** There Is No Fear of God Before Their Eyes (Judg.; Ruth; 1 Sam. 1–6)

## **VOL 4: From Unity to Division**

(1 Samuel–1 Kings) Summer 2022

**Unit 10:** Because of Your Hardened Heart (1 Sam. 8–15)

**Unit 11:** Create a Clean Heart for Me (1 Sam. 16–17; 2 Sam. 6–7; 11–12)

**Unit 12:** If You Walk Before Me with a Heart of Integrity (1 Kings 1–12)

## **VOL 5: From Rebellion to Exile**

(1 Kings–The Prophets) Fall 2022

**Unit 13:** Your Passions Wage War Within You (1 Kings 12–18; 2 Kings 1–5; Isa. 44)

**Unit 14:** Seek the Lord, All You Humble of the Earth (2 Chron. 24; Isa. 22; 25; 30; Zeph.)

**Unit 15:** He Has Made Every Nationality (Jonah; Nah.; 2 Chron. 36)

## **VOL 6: From Captivity to Restoration**

(The Prophets, Ezra–Esther) Winter 2022–23

**Unit 16:** The Lord Keeps His Eye on Those Who Fear Him (Jer. 29–30; Dan.)

**Unit 17:** Take Refuge in the Lord (Ezra 1–6; Zech. 13–14)

**Unit 18:** For Look, the Day Is Coming (Esth.; Neh.; Mal.)

## **VOL 7: From Heaven to Earth**

(The Gospels) Spring 2023

**Unit 19:** Here Is the Lamb of God  
(John 1–2; Luke 2; Mark 1; Matt. 4)

**Unit 20:** God’s Love Was Revealed  
Among Us in This Way (John 3–4)

**Unit 21:** Without Faith It Is Impossible  
to Please God (Luke 4–5)

## **VOL 8: From Wonder to Rejection**

(The Gospels) Summer 2023

**Unit 22:** The Works That I Do in My  
Father’s Name Testify About Me  
(Mark 4; 8; Luke 5; Matt. 9; John 10)

**Unit 23:** The Kingdom of God Is in Your  
Midst (Matt. 5–7; 13; 24; Luke 15; 17)

**Unit 24:** God’s Glory in the Face of Jesus  
Christ (Luke 13; John 11)

## **VOL 9: From Death to Resurrection**

(The Gospels) Fall 2023

**Unit 25:** Jerusalem, Jerusalem,  
Who Kills the Prophets  
(Matt. 21–25; Mark 1; John 6; 14)

**Unit 26:** The Hour Has Come  
(John 12; Matt. 26)

**Unit 27:** The King of the Jews  
(Luke 22–23; Matt. 27–28)

## **VOL 10: From Many People to One People**

(The Gospels, Acts) Winter 2023–24

**Unit 28:** I Am with You Always  
(Luke 24; John 20–21; Matt. 28)

**Unit 29:** You Will Be My Witnesses  
(Acts 1–2)

**Unit 30:** Every Day the Lord Added to  
Their Number (Acts 2–5)

## **VOL 11: From One Nation to All Nations**

(Acts and Epistles) Spring 2024

**Unit 31:** Every Knee Will Bow  
(Acts 5–8; Phil. 2)

**Unit 32:** The Power and the Wisdom  
of God (Acts 9–12; 1 Cor. 1; 12)

**Unit 33:** A Prisoner of Christ Jesus  
(Acts 9; 13–14; Philem.)

## **VOL 12: From This World to the World to Come**

(Acts, Epistles, Revelation) Summer 2024

**Unit 34:** Ambassadors for Christ  
(Acts 15–19; 2 Cor. 5; Eph. 4)

**Unit 35:** That I May Gain Christ  
(Acts 20–28; Phil. 3)

**Unit 36:** A New Heaven and a New Earth  
(Rev. 4–5; 19–22)

# HOW TO USE THE DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

*Central to your personal and group experience with The Gospel Project for Adults is the Daily Discipleship Guide. Here's how to make the most of your time with it:*

## BEGIN WITH PERSONAL TIME IN THE WORD

We recommend beginning your week with the daily devotions. These devotions lay a foundation for what will be explored and discussed in your group time as you build healthy rhythms of personal discipleship.



+

### DAY 1

**READ:**  
**Acts 4:5-12**

**FOCAL PASSAGE:**  
**Acts 4:10**

NOTES



**KEY DOCTRINE #83:  
NEW IDENTITY OF  
THE BELIEVER**

When a person places faith in Christ, that person undergoes a fundamental change of identity. He or she goes from being an enemy under God's wrath (Ephesians 2:1-3) to being welcomed into God's family as a beloved child (Ephesians 2:19). The believer in Christ is declared righteous on account of Christ's perfect life and substitutionary death and resurrection. No longer is the person a slave to sin, defined by past failures or present struggles. The person has been delivered from the realm of darkness and now belongs to the kingdom of light (Colossians 1:13). Anyone who is in Christ is a "new creation" in whom the old, sinful self is passed away and the new, redeemed self is alive and progressing, becoming more and more like Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).

The testimony of a transformed life is a powerful force. Imagine how you might have responded should you have known or seen the lame man begging at the Beautiful Gate each day, only to subsequently find him healed—leaping for joy and praising God. You would have likely been overwhelmed at the power and salvation God offered.

Peter said the same kind of transformation that healed the man has come to all Christians. Those saved by Jesus have been healed of a far deeper malady than lameness. Their sins have been forgiven and their dead heart made alive. In one of his letters, Peter described all Christians as a royal priesthood, a nation of holy people who proclaim the glory and praise of the One who drew us out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9). Once dead in sin and separated from God, now Christians give praise to God for the salvation Jesus accomplished on the cross. Those who know someone whose life has been radically changed by Christ are compelled by the power of God. In this way, those far from God see the gospel lived out in the transformed life of a follower of Jesus.

**What do those who see your life learn about Jesus?**

## STUDY THE BIBLE WITH YOUR BIBLE

Reading and studying the Bible is absolutely life-changing, and we believe the best way to study the Bible is to use the Bible you own. Whether you read from the CSB, ESV, NIV, KJV, or many other translations, the Daily Discipleship Guide helps you engage with the session not only with our book but your Book.



## GET BACK TO BASICS

As you read and study, we recommend using the tool found in your Daily Discipleship Guide called the “7 Arrows of Bible Reading.” The 7 Arrows guide both novice and experienced students of the Word through the basic mechanics of Bible study by asking a few key questions of any passage (see pages 10-11 for more information).

### 7 ARROWS OF BIBLE READING

by Matt Rogers

There is often a vast disconnect between the awareness of the need for disciple-making and practical tools that actually aid in this work. Three factors are essential: Scripture, relationships, and time. Discipleship happens when the life-changing truth of Scripture is infused into genuine relationships over an extended period of time.

Our desire was to create a simple, reproducible strategy that would facilitate this process. This led us to develop a simple strategy for small clusters (2-3 people) to meet together regularly and talk about the Scriptures and apply them to their lives.

The seven arrows of Bible reading were an attempt at developing a tool for proper hermeneutics to power these relationships. We did not want our people to simply talk about the Bible. We wanted them to understand the Bible and know how to apply it to their lives. Each cluster would read a predetermined passage of Scripture and discuss it using these seven arrows.

The diagram consists of seven arrows arranged in a circle, pointing clockwise. Each arrow is accompanied by a question:

- What does this passage say?
- What did this passage mean to its original audience?
- What does this passage tell us about God?
- What does this passage tell us about man?
- What does this passage demand of me?
- How does this passage change the way I relate to people?
- How does this passage prompt me to pray?

10

## DISCUSS AND APPLY IN COMMUNITY

Each session concludes with a two-page discussion guide. This guide includes the key points of the session along with interactive questions and activities designed to address the needs of a variety of learning styles. Mark up the discussion guide, make notes, fill in the blanks, do the activities, write out questions and thoughts—make it yours!



# 7 ARROWS OF BIBLE READING

by Matt Rogers

There is often a vast disconnect between the awareness of the need for disciple-making and practical tools that actually aid in this work. Three factors are essential: Scripture, relationships, and time. Discipleship happens when the life-changing truth of Scripture is infused into genuine relationships over an extended period of time.

Our desire was to create a simple, reproducible strategy that would facilitate this process. This led us to develop a simple strategy for small clusters (2-3 people) to meet together regularly and talk about the Scriptures and apply them to their lives.

The seven arrows of Bible reading were an attempt at developing a tool for proper hermeneutics to power these relationships. We did not want our people to simply talk about the Bible. We wanted them to understand the Bible and know how to apply it to their lives. Each cluster would read a predetermined passage of Scripture and discuss it using these seven arrows.



**What does this passage say?**



**What did this passage mean to its original audience?**



**What does this passage tell us about God?**



**What does this passage tell us about man?**



**What does this passage demand of me?**



**How does this passage change the way I relate to people?**



**How does this passage prompt me to pray?**

**ARROW 1:** The goal was for the clusters to start by summarizing the main point of the passage as succinctly as possible, ideally in one sentence.

**ARROW 2:** Next, the clusters sought to discern authorial intent for the passage by asking what it meant to its original audience. Since a text of Scripture can never mean what it never meant, it is necessary to begin by discerning what the text meant. Often this may require the clusters to consult other study tools or cross-reference other biblical texts to arrive at the meaning of the text.

**ARROW 3:** Thirdly, we asked what the text tells us about the nature and character of God and specifically His work through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

**ARROW 4:** Fourthly, the text was analyzed to see what it tells us about humanity. Bryan Chappell refers to this as the “fallen condition focus” of the text. What does the text reveal about sin and humankind’s need for the gospel?

**ARROW 5:** Then we moved the clusters to application. Since we had rooted the clusters in the meaning of the text, they were now positioned to rightly apply it’s meaning to their lives.

**ARROW 6:** From there we wanted our clusters to apply the Scripture to their relationships with others. Ideally, they would discuss how the text shaped both how they related to other believers and how they lived on mission in the world.

**ARROW 7:** Finally, the clusters rooted their prayers in the Scriptures. Hopefully, the previous six arrows kindled the flames of passionate prayer in the lives of the clusters—both for their own sanctification and for their mission to the lost.

With this model, we touched on three important areas for discipleship:

**Scripture**—Disciple-making was rooted in a rightful understanding of Scripture and not in simply doing life together, unpacking another sermon, or dependance on classroom instruction.

**Simplicity**—Disciple-making was simple enough for everyone to get involved. All believers could take these principles, a Bible, and a relationship with a young Christian and get to work.

**Stickiness**—Disciple-making through understanding and applying Scripture was etched in the minds of our young church. They could use these same arrows not only to guide their cluster discussions but also their personal Bible study, small group leadership, and comprehension of sermons.

These arrows have proven to be a unique tool in our disciple-making toolbox that the Lord is using to call and build faithful and fruitful followers of Jesus.

Matt Rogers is the teaching pastor at The Church at Cherrydale in Greenville, South Carolina. His church developed the Seven Arrows tool to help people read and understand Scripture within their small groups. The concept has gone on to form the basis of a 52-week devotional for teens from Lifeway Students, the Seven Arrows Bible from B&H, and is now featured in The Gospel Project for Adults and Students.

## UNIT 28

+

**I AM WITH YOU**

---

**ALWAYS**

---

# “Jesus Came and Stood Among Them”

by Daniel Ritchie

I have loved hiking for as long as I can remember. My dad took me on weekend hikes as a kid. Sometimes we would hike through our local park, and other times we would drive a couple of hours to the North Carolina mountains to hike mountain tops or to take in the views of some beautiful waterfalls. Those were some of the sweetest memories I had with my dad in my childhood. Those early years with my dad developed a love that would continue to play a role in my life all the way through adulthood.

I’m just shy of turning 40 years old, but I still make a habit of getting out and hiking whenever I get the chance. I travel quite a bit as an evangelist, so I have had the chance to hike through some amazing stretches of God’s creation. In the past couple of years, I have hiked through Zion National Park, the Alaskan Wilderness, the Appalachian Trail, and a few Sequoia groves. Our planet does not lack for beautiful reminders of the majesty and grandeur of God.

## **GOD’S TRANSCENDENCE AND IMMANENCE**

Each park has its own sense of beauty and wonder, but there are always two lessons that God stamps on my heart on every hike. Those are the lessons of God’s transcendence and God’s immanence. His transcendence is evident in every mountain peak and sunset vista. Our Creator God is so massively powerful that He brought the mountains, valleys, oceans and rivers into existence with just a spoken word. His creative work leaves me awestruck.

As much as I am floored by the immensity of both God’s work and His character on these long hikes, I also come to the clear understanding of God’s immanence—the fact that He is a God who is personal and near to me. That is a fact that is clear through a significant portion of Scripture, especially in Isaiah 7:14, where the promised Messiah is to be called Immanuel—God with us. That promise always stands, but there are times in

my life when the busyness and noise of life crowd out my grasp of that promise. Affording myself the chance to quiet the jumble of noise in my life to know the character and promise of God even on a hike is the same sort of stillness that God invited Israel to walk in Psalm 46:10.

Don't allow a swarm of trials or the busyness of the Christmas season to choke out your understanding of the fact that God is with you. He is ruling all the created order from His throne, but He is also with you in the times that you need a comforting Father by your side. He is set apart as a holy and mighty God, but He is also with those oppressed and low in spirit (Isaiah 57:15).

### **GOD'S CLOSE PRESENCE IN THE GOSPEL**

There is no more clear way that God has shown how personal and near He is to us than in the gospel itself. The incarnation of Christ shows that God is not far from any of us. Even though He made the world, He chose to come to the world as a man so that those who believe in Him could become His children (John 1:10-12).

The nearness of God does not stop with Jesus stepping into the world as a man. He goes on from His birth to live a sinless

The incarnation of  
Christ shows that  
God is not far from  
any of us.

life that we could not live so that He could give Himself up as the perfect sacrifice for our sins (1 Peter 1:19). In doing so, we are sanctified through Jesus for all time (Hebrews 10:10). The distance between a holy God and a sin-soaked man has been bridged by the work of Jesus. Because of Jesus we can draw near to God with our hearts clean and our bodies washed in purity (10:22). A high and holy God has made a way for us to draw near to Him—all by His work and grace.

### **GOD WITH US IN HIS MISSION**

God does not stop there at our salvation in terms of being near to us. He also brings us into His mission of restoring the lost unto Himself. He calls His church to go out into the world and proclaim this gospel of grace to all we meet. He asks His church to make disciples just as He made disciples of the twelve men who

The distance between a holy God and a sin-soaked man has been bridged by the work of Jesus.

## Know that He loves you, He is with you, and He is near you.

---

followed Him (Matthew 28:19). Yet, God kindly does not leave us on our own in the mission. He promises to be with us until He returns again (28:20) and promises to supply us strength (Philippians 4:13) and supply our needs that we may bring Him glory (4:19-20).

In His character, in His gospel, and in His mission, God wants you to know that He is always with you. It might not always feel like He is though. There will be times of trial and chaos that can seem to wipe that reality away, but that is just the fog of our feelings and circumstances. That is why we remind ourselves daily that He won't leave us (Deuteronomy 31:8) and that He is near all who call out to Him (Psalm 145:18). Know that He loves you, He is with you, and He is near you. Remind yourself daily of God's presence in your life, trusting the promise of Psalm 73:28 that says His presence is your good.



# SCRIPTURES ARE CONFIRMED

**+** **SESSION IN A SENTENCE:**

In appearing to His followers, the risen Jesus gave them, and all who believe, peace, hope, and confidence.

**+** **BACKGROUND PASSAGE:**

Luke 24

**+** **SETTING:**

Luke 24 opens on resurrection morning, when some women bringing spices for the body of Jesus found the stone rolled away from His tomb and two gleaming angels instead. The mourning women were terrified, but Jesus had risen! The women told the disciples, who thought the women were out of their minds, but Peter went to see the open tomb. That same day, two disciples heading to Emmaus encountered a stranger who seemed to be completely unaware of Jesus and His tragic death. The most exciting part of the world's greatest story was just beginning.

# DAY 1

## READ:

Luke 24:36-43

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

Luke 24:36

## NOTES

I saved up \$700 for my first car and bought one from my dad's best friend. I sold that car to my sister and bought another from a family we'd known for years. I drove that car all through college, but after graduating I decided to move up in vehicle.

So at 22 years old, I was getting ready to sell a car to a stranger for the first time. The buyer had called, and we had scheduled a time to meet. I had the title in hand, and he assured me he had cash. But at the last minute, I got cold feet: What if this guy had bad intentions? Would he rob me and steal my car? So I did the only thing I knew to do: I asked my dad to be there for the transaction. I walked in with confidence and peace, not because of my own strength or confidence in the buyer's integrity, but because my bear-of-a-man father was standing there.

Perhaps that's the feel of today's focal passage: Though the disciples were startled, Jesus proclaimed peace over them. Jesus was present, and with Jesus present, peace was present. The same is true for us today.

**In what situation are you lacking peace today? Can you see Jesus in this situation? How does that change your peace level?**

## VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"We may ignore, but we can nowhere evade, the presence of God. The world is crowded with Him. He walks everywhere *incognito*. And the *incognito* is not always hard to penetrate. The real labour is to attend. In fact, to come awake. Still more, to remain awake."<sup>1</sup>

—C. S. Lewis (1898–1963)

# DAY 2

## READ:

**Matthew 14:22-33**

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

**Matthew 14:26-27**

## NOTES



### **KEY DOCTRINE #23: GOD IS TRANSCENDENT**

God's transcendence refers to the fact that He is distinct from and independent of His created world. He is transcendent over us in regards to His greatness and power as well as His goodness and purity. The implication of this doctrine is that God is inherently superior to humanity; His thoughts and ways are higher than ours (Isaiah 55:8-9). When God saves us, He restores us so we can fulfill our human purpose; this does not mean that we become God or that distinctions between God and humanity are obliterated. Understanding God's transcendence evokes awe and wonder at His goodness and power.

In this week's focal passages, the disciples huddled together in a room were startled and terrified when Jesus appeared because they thought they had seen a ghost (Luke 24:37). It seems that's the first conclusion their thinly-stretched minds had locked on when the crucified and supposedly-dead Jesus appeared to them in bodily form.

The funny thing is that this wasn't the first time they mistook Jesus for a ghost. In Matthew 14, the disciples were in a boat headed across the Sea of Galilee, battered by a storm. When Jesus came, walking on the sea early in the morning (Matthew 14:25), again their brains went immediately to the conclusion that it was a ghost.

I had a similar experience years ago. While walking through a commercial haunted house with friends—already on edge—I was grabbed and lifted into the air by one of the “monsters.” Instantly paralyzed with fear, I couldn't for my life figure out how I would leave that amusement place alive. But then I heard a familiar voice whisper, “It's me, Denny.” One of my good friends had played a prank; I instantly felt peace.

Hear Jesus's words today in your own life: “It is I” (Matthew 24:27). Don't be afraid.

**Have you taken time today to be truly still and hear the voice of the Lord?**

# DAY 3

## READ:

Luke 24:36-43

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

Luke 24:38-40

## NOTES

One of my friends has a really neat computer case. It's split down the middle vertically. The left side of the case says, "Left brain," and describes what a predominantly left-brain, or analytical, person tends to do or be or think. The color scheme on this side of the case is black and white, the typeface is traditional, and the background image appears to be something from a newspaper. The right side of the case is awash in brilliant colors. It's heading, "Right brain," is written in a scripted font, and it describes the characteristics of a predominantly right-brain, or artistic, person. I remember this case vividly because of the woman who owns it. Raleigh is the epitome of a right-brained person. Artistic, flamboyant, and colorful in all she does, her gorgeous personality lights up a room.

But that wasn't Jesus. He wasn't flashy and likely didn't stand out in a crowd. But He changed humanity forever. When He appeared to His disciples in Luke 24, He didn't appeal to the vivid, imaginary parts of their brains; He went to the logical side, inviting them to see and touch. Glory to the One who crafts each sunrise and still sets all the universe in order. We praise Him for His logic as well as His artistry.

**How have you seen God through logic or analytics? How have you experienced Him in creativity?**

# DAY 4

## READ:

Luke 24:44-49

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

Luke 24:44-45

## NOTES

If you read the book of Matthew, you'll see the word "fulfilled" several times. It's a rich Greek word, carrying with it the idea of making full, complete, filled to the brim, or perfect. Matthew, our resident Hebrew writer of his Gospel, went out of his way to point out when something from the Old Testament Scriptures had been fulfilled (see Matthew 2:15,17).

Jesus didn't just check off the list of Messiah prophecies (though there were hundreds); He completed them perfectly. Some of the prophecies even seemed contradictory: the promised One would come from Galilee, Egypt, and Bethlehem; God managed to make each of them come to pass when His Son was still an infant, dependent on the decisions of His earthly parents. Jesus lived perfectly, died sacrificially, and arose triumphantly.

When He appeared to His disciples, Jesus reminded them that He had told them that everything written about Him must be "fulfilled" (Luke 24:44). In pointing His learners back to the Scriptures, He reminded them not only that He is exactly who He said He was, but also that God is faithful. Even today, we can find confidence in studying the Old Testament and seeing signs pointing us to Christ. As Paul wrote in Romans 15:4, the past writings were written to give us hope through the endurance and encouragement of Scripture.

**How can studying God's fulfilled promises in the Bible strengthen your faith even today?**

# DAY 5

## READ:

**Luke 24:44-49**

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

**Luke 24:46-49**

## NOTES

Jesus told His disciples that they would be witnesses to His suffering, death, and resurrection so that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed to all the nations starting in Jerusalem (Luke 24:47), the very city where He was killed. I wish I could see the visible reaction of the disciples to that city: Jerusalem was where they were hiding at that moment, locked in a room for fear of the local religious authorities. Jerusalem probably wasn't a desired location for anyone affiliated with Jesus. Perhaps some of them were looking to get out at the first opportunity.

But we cannot forget that God loved Jerusalem; it was David's city. God had stopped the angel bringing a plague as it got to the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite (2 Samuel 24:16), which is the exact place where David purchased the site for the temple. Hundreds of years before that, it had been called Mount Moriah, the place where Abraham had been willing to offer his only son as a sacrifice (Genesis 22:2; 2 Chronicles 3:1). In that same city, God would not resist the offering of His only Son.

So it wasn't much of a surprise that the best news ever—the offer of forgiveness for our sins—would also begin in Jerusalem.

**What place holds a special significance in your heart?  
How has God shaped you there?**

# GROUP

NOTES

## VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

“The Way, the Truth, the Life  
Thou art, This, this I know; to  
this I cleave; The sweet new  
language of my heart, ‘Lord,  
I believe.’ I have no doubts to  
bring to Thee; My doubt has  
fled; my faith is free.”<sup>2</sup>

–Harriet McEwen Kimball  
(1834–1917)

### **POINT 1: The risen Messiah brings peace** (Luke 24:36-38a).

Jesus offers His peace in the midst of our fear, confusion, and chaos.

**?** How can we know and experience the peace of Christ in the midst of panic, chaos, or confusion?

### **KEY DOCTRINE #23: GOD IS TRANSCENDENT**

God’s transcendence refers to the fact that He is distinct from and independent of His created world. He is transcendent over us in regards to His greatness and power as well as His goodness and purity. The implication of this doctrine is that God is inherently superior to humanity; His thoughts and ways are higher than ours (Isaiah 55:8-9). When God saves us, He restores us so we can fulfill our human purpose; this does not mean that we become God or that distinctions between God and humanity are obliterated. Understanding God’s transcendence evokes awe and wonder at His goodness and power.

**?** How can we apply our knowledge of God’s transcendence to our lives?

### **POINT 2: The risen Messiah overcomes doubts** (Luke 24:38b-43).

Jesus doesn’t minimize or dismiss the confusion and doubts of His disciples; instead, He gives them the opportunity to experience and find confidence in Him.

**?** What have you experienced in the past that made you doubt God and how did Jesus reveal Himself in it?

Even when doubting, we can be confident that Jesus will demonstrate the truthfulness of who He is as He wants us to find the joy of assurance and salvation.

**?** How do we help others (or ourselves) when we face doubts about God or His Word?

### **POINT 3: The risen Messiah fulfills Scripture** (Luke 24:44-49).

Jesus still opens minds, allowing us to understand how He fulfills the Scriptures, being our Messiah who grants forgiveness of sin to those who repent.

**?** From Day 4: How can studying God's fulfilled promises in the Bible strengthen your faith even today?

Jesus calls His disciples to be His witnesses, knowing that we have the promise of the Holy Spirit.

**?** How are we called to be witnesses today?

## **MY RESPONSE**

Because what the Scriptures teach about Jesus is trustworthy, we preach Jesus with complete confidence and unwavering boldness.

- **HEAD:** How can you point your eyes back to the Lord when circumstances are stealing your peace?
- **HEART:** How can you praise God for how He pursues you and reveals Himself even in your doubts and fears?
- **HANDS:** What words or actions this week have revealed that you are a witness to Jesus our Lord?



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

### **VOICES from THE CHURCH**

"There is no greater commission or higher calling than to help others find the way to experience God's presence."<sup>3</sup>

—Darrell L. Bock