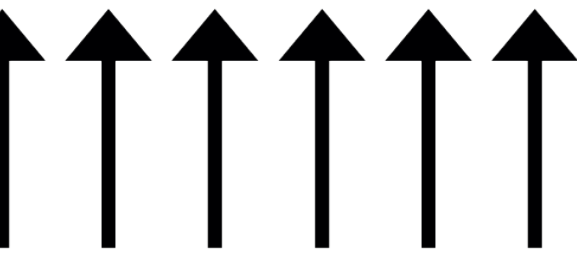


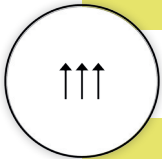
Small Group Participant's Guide

A
Higher
Place

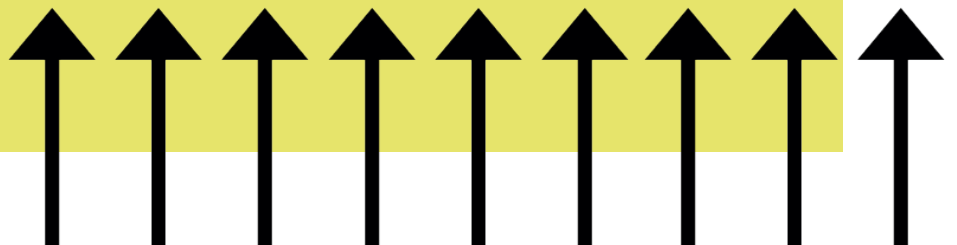


What does it mean to live HIGHER?

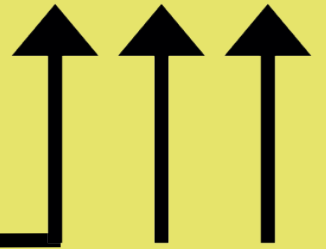
...advancing in one's spiritual journey by deepening the relationship with God and striving for greater personal and communal growth in faith. This concept emphasizes moving beyond complacency and actively seeking a more profound connection with the divine, leading to a more fulfilling and impactful Christian life.

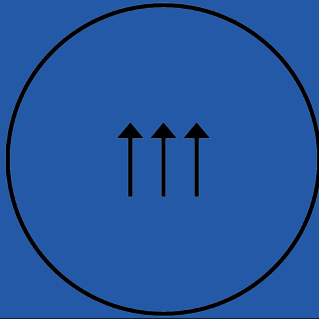


Step into the greater purpose God has in store for your life through Higher, an inspiring 8-week small group series. Together, we'll explore how our church's 7 core values can elevate our faith, relationships, and impact as we grow closer to God and His calling. Each week, we'll unpack scripture, share meaningful discussions, and discover practical ways to live with greater purpose and alignment. Don't miss this opportunity to go higher in your journey with God! Join us as we take the next step together.



THIS
PARTICIPANT'S
GUIDE
INCLUDES





DISCUSSION

to engage in meaningful and life changing conversation with your group...

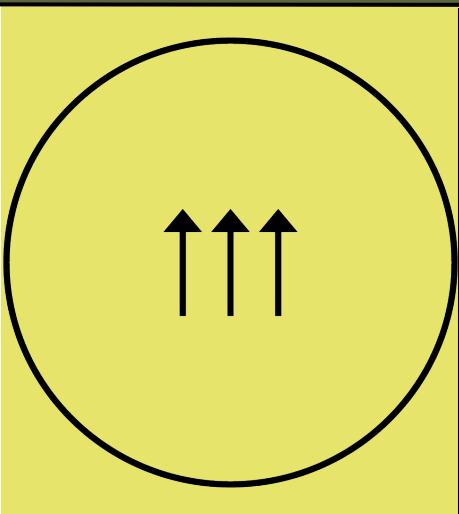
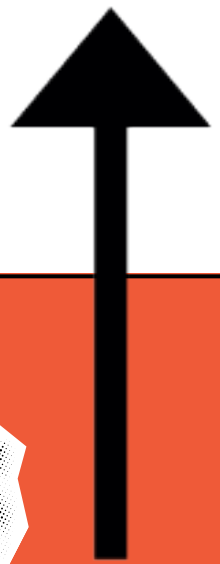
PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Once we *hear* the Word, we are now responsible to **DO** something with it. **James 1:22 (NASB)** says to prove yourselves as *doers* of the Word, not just *hearers who deceive themselves*. Use this section to practice prayer, journaling, meditation, and even accountability so that you can grow and bear fruit!



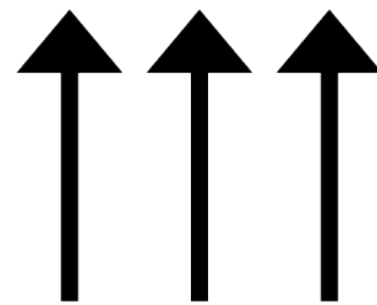
VIDEOS

15-20 min videos with teaching curriculum to provide content and foundation for discussion



“Homework” provides you with some *Key Take-Aways* from the lesson, as well as *Key Scriptures & Questions* for reflection as well as a 5-Day Devotional.

Participant WEEK 1



VIDEO

In this week's video Ps Joe Champion shares with us Climbing Higher: Lessons from Zacchaeus.

NOTES

DISCUSSION

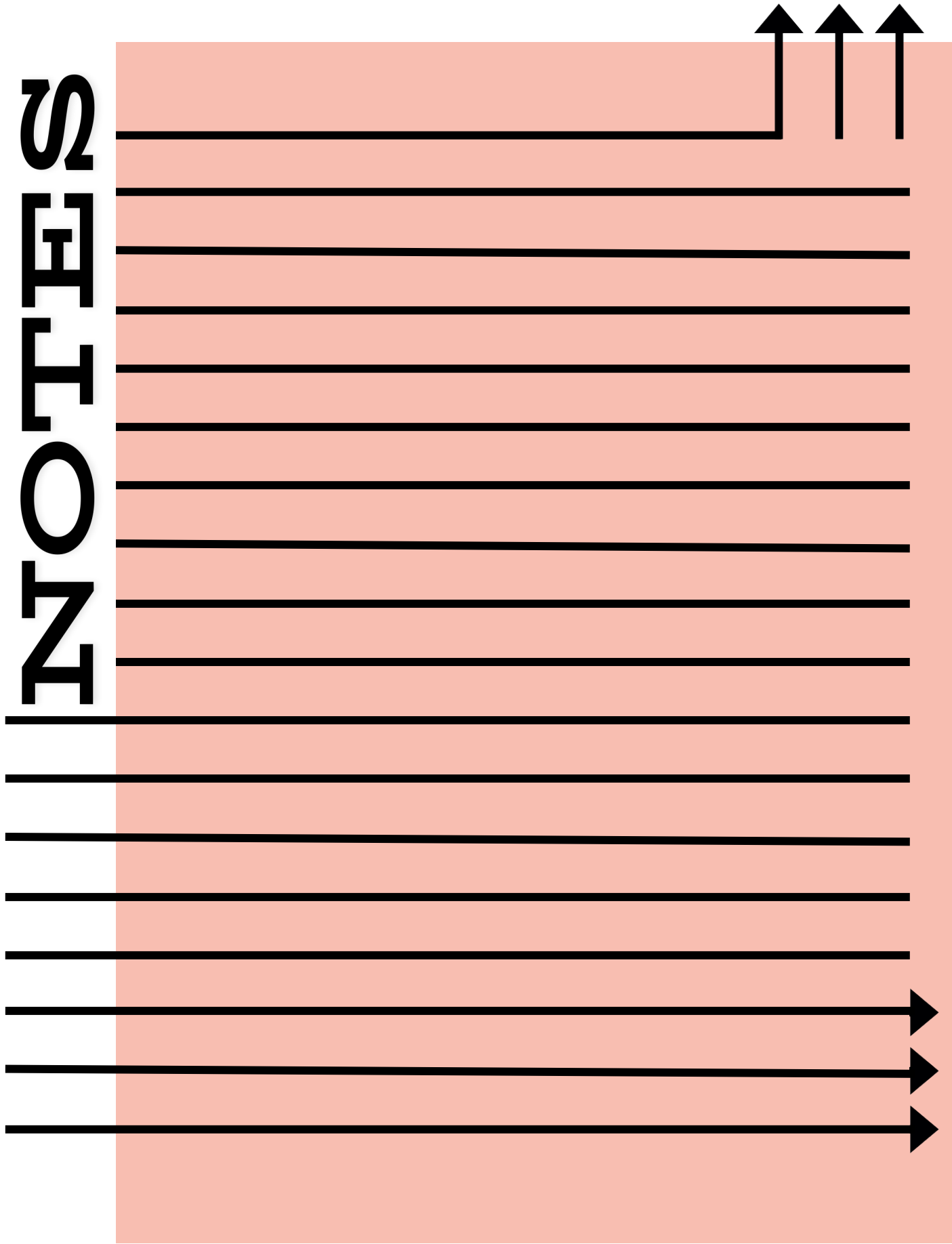


- The message highlighted that Zaccheus didn't make excuses or waste time. In what areas of your life do you find yourself making excuses or wasting time that could be used for spiritual growth?
- How has the "crowd" (societal norms, peer pressure, family expectations) influenced your spiritual journey? Have you ever needed to separate yourself from the crowd's thinking to pursue God?
- Pastor Joe emphasized that fear shouldn't hold us back. What fears are currently preventing you from "going higher" in your faith or pursuing God's calling?
- Zaccheus's encounter with Jesus led to immediate life changes. Discuss a time when an encounter with God led to significant changes in your life, habits, or relationships.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- God's call is always to go higher in our spiritual lives and perspectives.
- Taking advantage of opportunities to seek Jesus can lead to transformative encounters.
- Going higher often requires overcoming obstacles and breaking free from limiting mindsets.
- True salvation results in visible changes in our lives, relationships, and priorities.

Participant



Participant

Luke 19:1-10

“Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. And there was a man called by the name of Zaccheus; he was a chief tax collector and he was rich. Zaccheus was trying to see who Jesus was, and he was unable due to the crowd, because he was short in stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up a sycamore tree in order to see Him, because He was about to pass through that way. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, “Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house.” And he hurried and came down, and received Him joyfully. When the people saw this, they all began to complain, saying, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner!” But Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I am giving to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone, I am giving back four times as much.” And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.””



KEY SCRIPTURE

QUESTIONS...

How does Zacchaeus's immediate change in behavior after encountering Jesus challenge you?

.....

How can we cultivate a mindset of generosity and restitution like Zacchaeus, especially in areas where we may have wronged others?

.....

What steps can we take to make our lives more inviting to Jesus, so that He would want to 'stay at our house' as He did with Zacchaeus?

RESPONSES...

Participant

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- Identify one "excuse" you often make that hinders your spiritual growth. Commit to replacing it with a positive action this week.
- Set aside 15 minutes each day this week to "seek Him more" through prayer, Bible reading, or worship.
- Choose one relationship in your life where you can demonstrate Christ-like kindness and generosity, even if it's challenging.
- Reflect on your current habits. Identify one habit that doesn't align with your faith and take steps to change it.
- Write down a "higher" vision for your life that aligns with God's purposes.

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

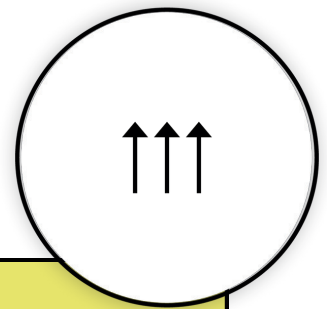
DAY 1

Seeking a Higher Perspective Luke 19:1-10

Zacchaeus' story reminds us that sometimes we need to elevate our perspective to truly see Jesus. Just as Zacchaeus climbed a tree to overcome his physical limitations, we too must rise above our spiritual limitations. What "trees" do you need to climb in your life to get a better view of Christ? Perhaps it's dedicating more time to prayer, diving deeper into Scripture, or stepping out of your comfort zone in service. Remember, Jesus notices our efforts to seek Him. He saw Zacchaeus in the tree and called him by name. Today, reflect on how you can actively seek a higher perspective in your walk with God.

REFLECTION

Participant



DAY 2

Overcoming Excuses Philippians 3:12-14

Zacchaeus didn't let his stature or societal position stop him from pursuing Jesus. Paul, in Philippians, speaks of pressing on toward the goal, forgetting what lies behind. What excuses are holding you back from fully pursuing God's call on your life? Maybe it's past failures, current circumstances, or fear of the unknown. Today, identify one excuse you've been clinging to and commit it to prayer. Ask God for the strength to move past it, remembering that in Christ, we are more than conquerors (Romans 8:37).

REFLECTION

DAY 3

Redeeming the Time Ephesians 5:15-17

The sermon emphasized the importance of not wasting time. Zacchaeus seized the moment when Jesus was passing through. Paul urges us to make the best use of our time because the days are evil. In our fast-paced world, it's easy to get caught up in busyness without true productivity. Today, evaluate how you spend your time. Are there areas where you can cut back on time-wasters and invest more in your spiritual growth or in serving others? Consider setting aside specific times for prayer, Bible study, or acts of kindness. Remember, every moment is an opportunity to glorify God.

REFLECTION

Participant

DAY 4

Breaking Free from the Crowd Reading: Romans 12:2

Zacchaeus separated himself from the crowd to see Jesus. Similarly, we are called not to conform to the patterns of this world but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. It's easy to fall into groupthink or societal norms that may not align with God's ways. Reflect on areas in your life where you might be too influenced by the "crowd" - e.g. cultural values, peer pressure, or worldly ambitions. Ask God to help you discern His will and give you the courage to stand apart when necessary. How can you align your thoughts and actions more closely with God's Word today?

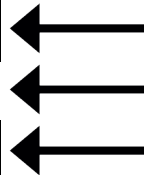
REFLECTION

DAY 5

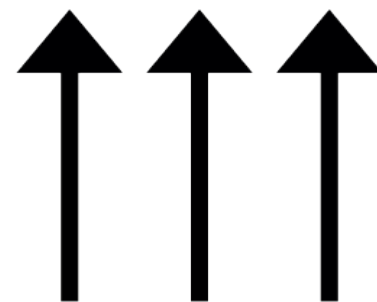
From Lost to Found Luke 15:1-7

Jesus said He came to seek and save the lost, as evidenced in Zacchaeus' transformation. The parable of the lost sheep further illustrates God's heart for those who are far from Him. Zacchaeus' encounter with Jesus led to immediate change - in his attitudes, actions, and eternal destiny. Reflect on your own journey from being lost to being found in Christ. If you haven't yet experienced this transformation, consider what's holding you back from fully embracing Jesus' offer of salvation. For those who have, how can you share this joy with others who are still "lost"? Today, pray for at least one person you know who needs to experience God's saving grace, and consider how you might be a light in their life.

REFLECTION



Participant WEEK 2



VIDEO

In this week's video Ps Riis Lewis shares our first core value: Jesus Is Our Pursuit

NOTES

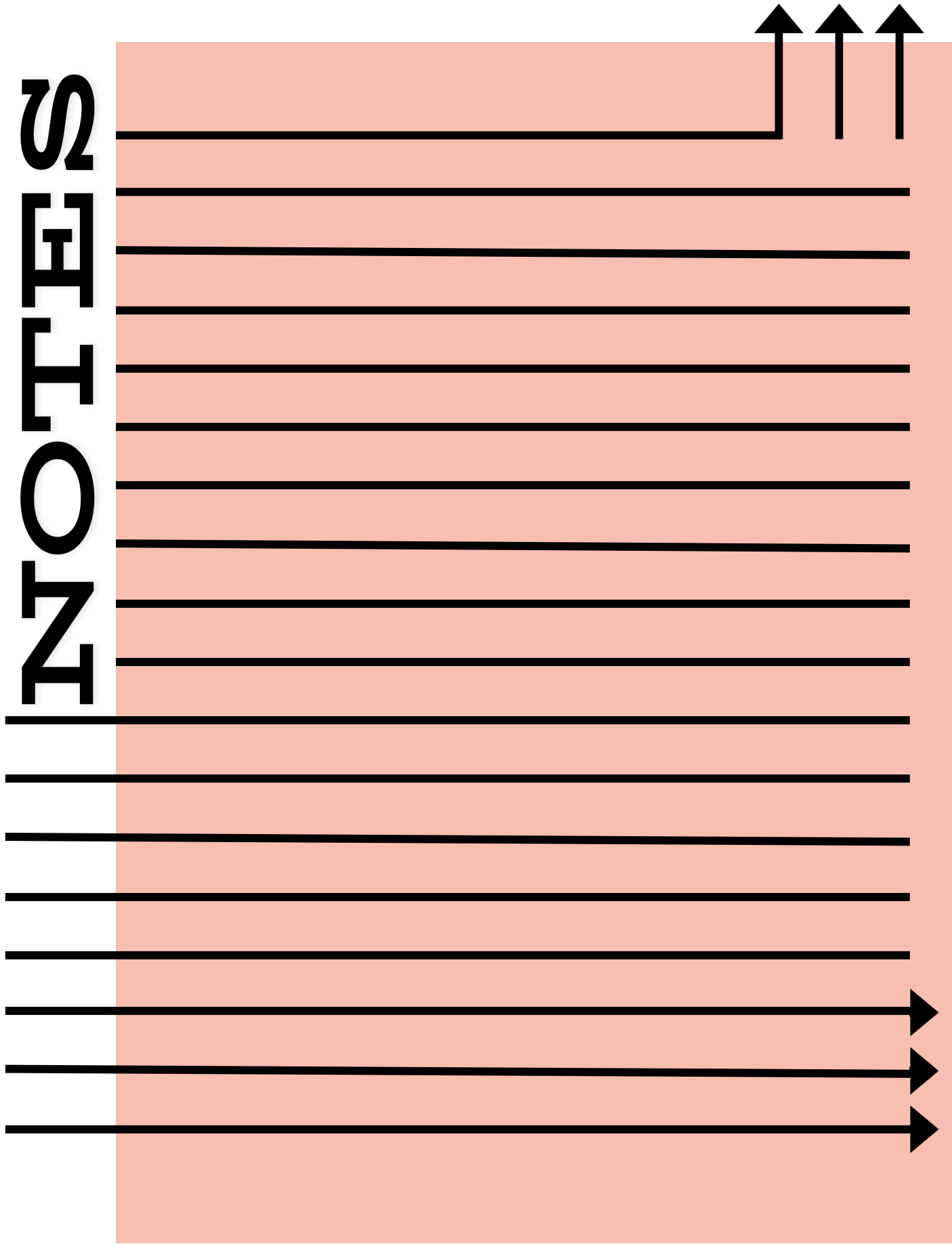
DISCUSSION

- How does the concept of Jesus being our ultimate pursuit challenge or change your current priorities in life?
- What 'ripple effects' have you witnessed in your own life or the lives of others when Jesus becomes the primary pursuit?
- How might our approach to serving, giving, and community involvement change if we truly embraced Jesus as our ultimate pursuit?
- In what areas of your life do you find it most challenging to make Jesus your primary pursuit, and how can you work to overcome these obstacles?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Jesus is not just important; He is central and supreme in all creation.
- Pursuing Jesus should be our highest priority and impacts every aspect of our lives.
- A genuine pursuit of Jesus will naturally lead to transformation in our personal lives and our church community.

Participant



Participant



KEY SCRIPTURE

Matthew 22:37-38 - "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment."

QUESTIONS...

Review the "I am" statements of Jesus from the Gospel of John. Which one resonates with you the most right now, and why?

How does Paul's description of Jesus' supremacy in Colossians 1:15-23 expand your understanding of who Jesus is?

RESPONSES...

Participant

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- Daily Devotion: Commit to spending focused time with Jesus each day this week, using the "I am" statements as a guide for reflection and prayer.
- Intentional Worship: During your personal or corporate worship times this week, consciously focus on Jesus' supremacy and worthiness.
- Ripple Effect Challenge: Identify one area in your life where you can more intentionally pursue Jesus, and observe how it affects other areas throughout the week.

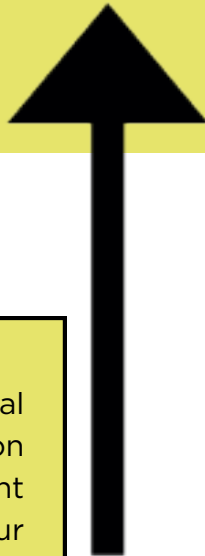
DAILY DEVOTIONAL

DAY 1

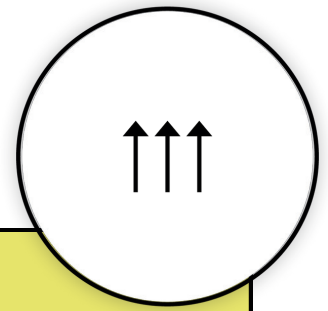
Jesus as the Bread of Life John 6:25-40

Jesus declares Himself as the Bread of Life, offering spiritual nourishment that satisfies our deepest hunger. Today, reflect on areas in your life where you feel empty or unfulfilled. How might pursuing Jesus more intentionally fill those voids? Consider how your daily choices either draw you closer to or further from the true source of satisfaction. Pray for a renewed hunger for God's presence and ask Him to reveal any substitutes you may be relying on instead of Him.

REFLECTION



Participant



DAY 2

The Light of the World John 8:12-20

In a world often shrouded in darkness, Jesus proclaims Himself as the Light of the World. This light isn't just for illumination, but for transformation. Where in your life do you need God's light to shine? Are there areas of confusion, sin, or uncertainty that need His clarity? Take time to invite Jesus to shed His light on your path, your decisions, and your relationships. Ask for the courage to step out of any darkness you've been comfortable in and fully into His radiant presence.

REFLECTION

DAY 3

The Good Shepherd John 10:1-18

The image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd speaks to His intimate care and sacrificial love for us. In what ways have you experienced God's shepherding in your life? Reflect on times when you've felt lost or vulnerable, and how God's guidance brought you back to safety. Consider also how you might extend this shepherding love to others in your sphere of influence. Are there "sheep" in your life who need gentle guidance or protection? Ask God for wisdom in caring for others as He cares for you.

REFLECTION

Participant

DAY 4

The Way, the Truth, and the Life John 14:1-14

Jesus' exclusive claim as the way to the Father challenges us to examine our spiritual journey. Are there other "ways" you've been tempting to pursue for fulfillment or salvation? Reflect on the areas of your life where you might be compromising truth for convenience or comfort. How can you more fully embrace Jesus as your ultimate source of truth and life? Pray for a deepened commitment to following Jesus alone, and for discernment to recognize and resist false paths.

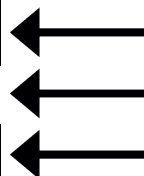
REFLECTION

DAY 5

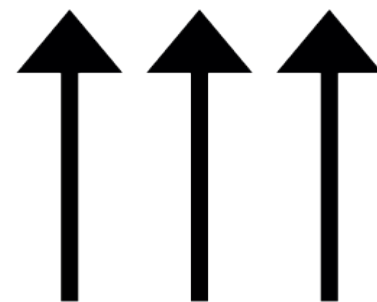
The Vine and the Branches John 15:1-17

The metaphor of the vine and branches beautifully illustrates our need for constant connection to Jesus. How vibrant is your connection to the Vine right now? Are there habits, attitudes, or distractions that are hindering your ability to "abide" in Christ? Take time to identify practical ways you can nurture your connection with Jesus daily. Reflect on the fruit that has been evident in your life when you've remained closely connected to Him. Ask the Holy Spirit to prune away anything that doesn't promote growth and to strengthen your attachment to the life-giving Vine.

REFLECTION



Participant WEEK 3



VIDEO

In this week's video Ps Ben Shanahan shares our second core value: Scripture Is Our Authority

NOTES

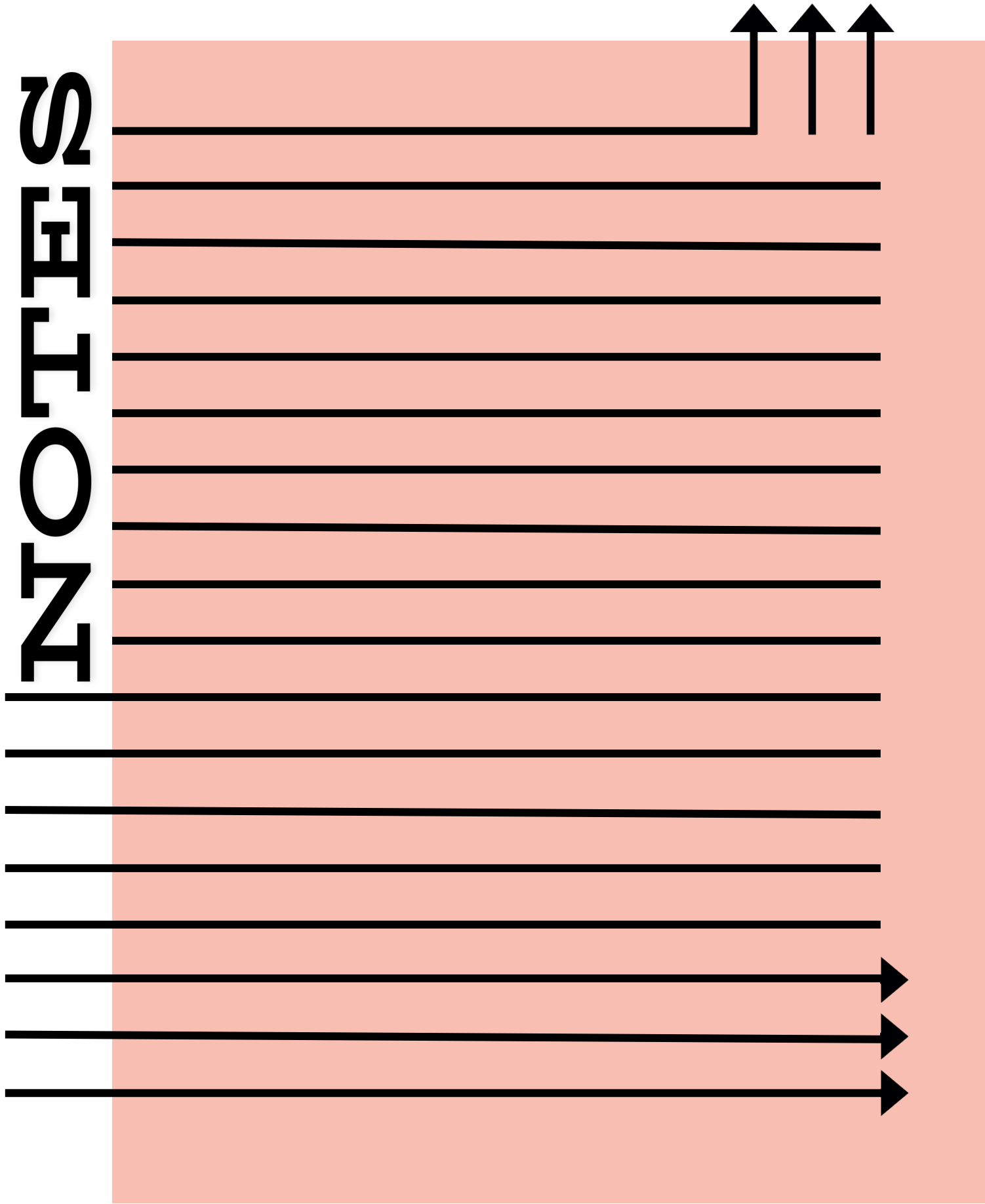
DISCUSSION

- How has your view of the Bible evolved over time, and in what ways does it currently impact your daily life?
- What challenges do you face in accepting Scripture as the ultimate authority in your life, and how do you address them?
- How does the concept of Scripture being 'God-breathed' (2 Timothy 3:16) influence your approach to reading and applying the Bible?
- What practical steps can you take to allow Scripture to shape your worldview and decision-making process?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The Bible is a miracle - authored by over 40 people across 1,500 years, telling one unified story.
- Scripture declares its own authority and is essential in our pursuit of Jesus.
- Viewing Scripture as our authority brings delight, is alive and active, and should encompass our entire lives.

Participant



Participant

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness...



KEY SCRIPTURE

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts.⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.⁸ Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.⁹ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

QUESTIONS...

Read the six truths and benefits of Scripture mentioned in Psalm 19:7-11. Which one resonates with you the most and why?

.....

Reflecting on Psalm 1:1-3, how can we cultivate a genuine delight in God's Word amidst the distractions of modern life?

.....

How can you practically apply Deuteronomy 6:6-9 in our current cultural context, integrating God's Word into every aspect of our lives?

RESPONSES...

Participant

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- Scripture Engagement: Commit to a specific plan for engaging with Scripture daily this week. It could be reading a chapter, memorizing a verse, or using a Bible app.
- Scripture in Daily Life: Choose one area of your life (e.g., work, relationships, decision-making) and discuss how you can intentionally apply Scripture's authority to it this week.
- Scripture Sharing: Practice talking about God's Word in everyday situations, as mentioned in Deuteronomy 6:6-9. Share your experiences with the group next time.
- Gratitude Journal: Keep a daily log this week of how Scripture refreshes, brings wisdom, gives joy, or provides light in your life.

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

DAY 1

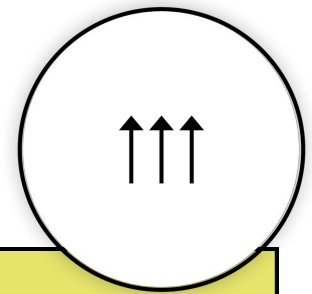
The Living Word Hebrews 4:12-13

Today's passage reminds us that God's Word is alive and active. Unlike any other book, the Bible has the power to penetrate our hearts and transform our lives. As you read, consider how Scripture has impacted you personally. Has it ever convicted you of sin, comforted you in sorrow, or guided you in decision-making? Reflect on a time when a particular verse or passage seemed to "come alive" for you. Today, approach your Bible reading with expectancy, asking God to speak to you through His living Word. How might you be more attentive to God's voice as you engage with Scripture?

REFLECTION



Participant



DAY 2

Delight in God's Law Psalm 1:1-3

The Psalmist paints a beautiful picture of a person who finds joy in God's Word. This individual is compared to a thriving tree, deeply rooted and consistently fruitful. Consider your own relationship with Scripture. Do you view Bible reading as a duty, or have you discovered the delight it can bring? Today, challenge yourself to approach God's Word with a sense of anticipation and joy. As you read, look for promises to cling to, commands to obey, or attributes of God to praise. How might your life look different if you truly delighted in God's law, meditating on it day and night?

REFLECTION

DAY 3

The Authority of Scripture 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Today's passage affirms the divine inspiration and practical usefulness of Scripture. Every part of the Bible is "God-breathed" and serves a purpose in our spiritual growth. As you reflect on this, consider areas in your life where you might need teaching, rebuking, correcting, or training in righteousness. Are there any parts of Scripture you tend to avoid because they challenge you? Remember, God's Word is given to equip us for every good work. Today, pray for a humble and open heart, willing to submit to the authority of Scripture in all areas of your life.

REFLECTION

Participant

DAY 4

Scripture as Our Guide Psalm 119:105-112

The Psalmist describes God's Word as a lamp to his feet and a light to his path. In a world full of conflicting voices and opinions, Scripture provides clear guidance for our lives. Think about a decision or challenge you're currently facing. Have you sought direction from God's Word? Today, commit to making Scripture your primary source of wisdom and guidance. Consider memorizing verse 105 as a reminder of the illuminating power of God's Word. How can you practically apply the truths of Scripture to light your path today?

REFLECTION

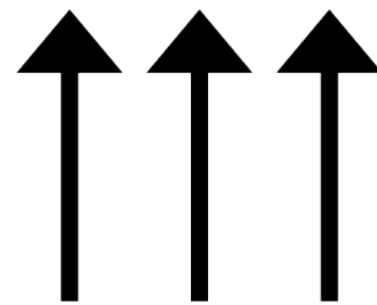
DAY 5

Hiding God's Word in Our Hearts Colossians 3:16-17

Today's passage encourages us to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly. This goes beyond casual reading; it involves internalizing Scripture so deeply that it shapes our thoughts, attitudes, and actions. Reflect on how you can more intentionally incorporate God's Word into your daily life. Could you start memorizing key verses? Perhaps you could set reminders to meditate on Scripture throughout the day? As you do this, notice how it impacts your interactions with others and your perspective on life's circumstances. Today, choose a verse from this week's readings to commit to memory, allowing God's Word to dwell richly in your heart.

REFLECTION

Participant WEEK 4



VIDEO

In this week's video Ps Tanner Lee shares our third core value: Holy Spirit Is Our Power.

NOTES

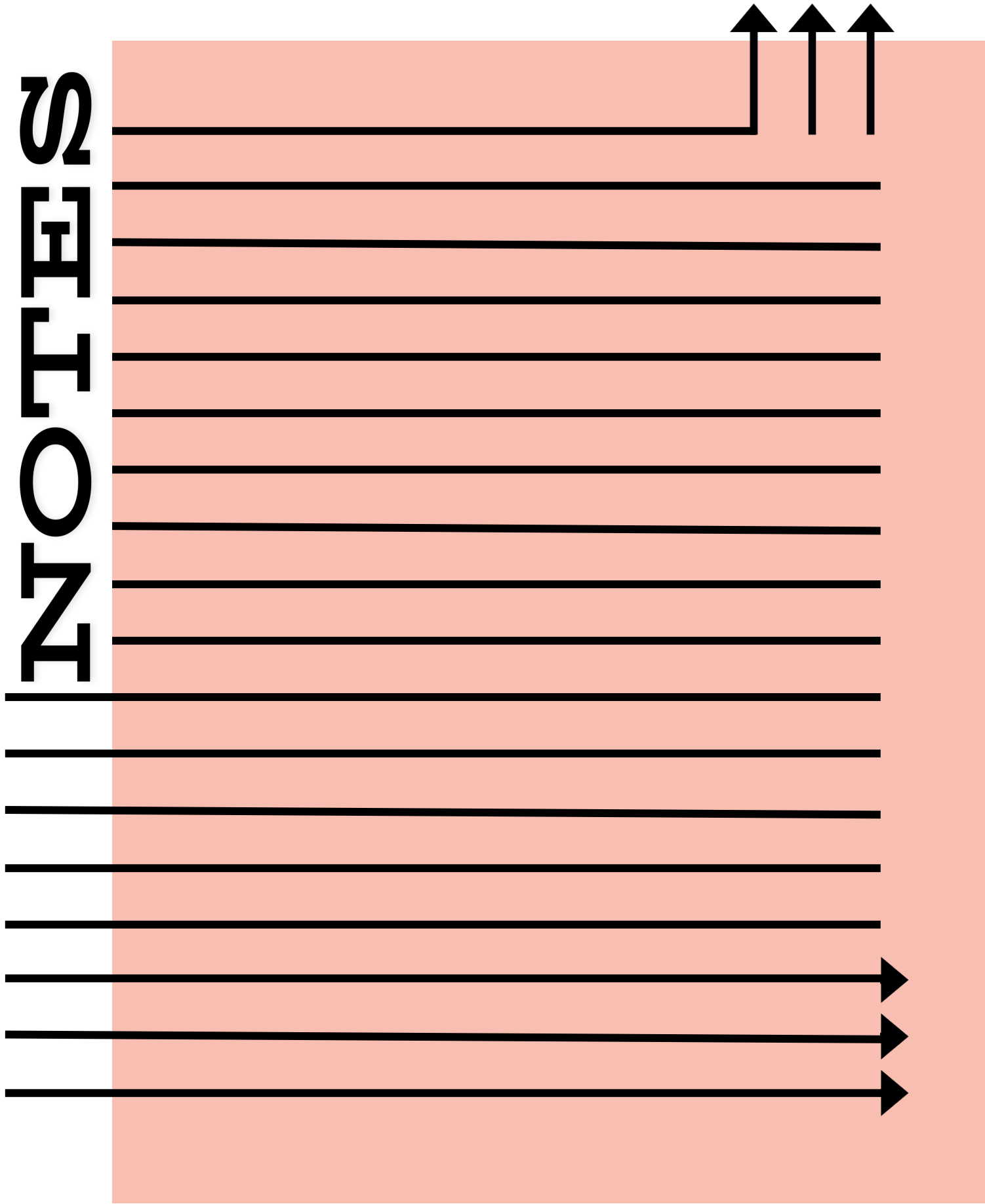
DISCUSSION

- How would you describe your current understanding and relationship with the Holy Spirit?
- How has the Holy Spirit helped you to know Jesus more personally? Can you share an example of when the Bible or worship became more alive to you through the Spirit's work?
- How does the idea of the Holy Spirit as 'dynamite power' challenge or inspire your view of what God can do in and through you?
- Reflecting on Peter's transformation from denying Jesus to boldly preaching, can you share a time when you felt the Holy Spirit empowered you to do something you thought was impossible?

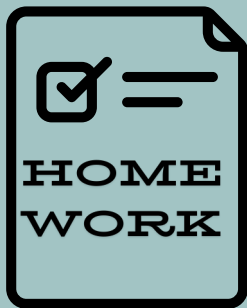
KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Many Christians know of the Holy Spirit but don't truly know Him personally.
- Jesus promised the disciples power through the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).
- The Holy Spirit's power is transformative, as seen in Peter's life.
- The Holy Spirit empowers us in four main areas: salvation, knowing Jesus, overcoming sin, and being witnesses.

Participant



Participant



KEY SCRIPTURE

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

QUESTIONS...

Titus 3:5 tells us that we are saved "through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit" How does this truth impact your view of salvation and your daily walk with God?

Read Galatians 5:16-17. What does "walking by the Spirit" look like in practical terms? How can we focus more on the Spirit than on our struggles with sin?

What spiritual gifts have you seen in operation in your life or in the lives of others? How have these gifts been used to witness for Christ?

RESPONSES...

Participant

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- This week, spend time each day asking the Holy Spirit to reveal Jesus to you as you read the Bible or engage in worship.
- Identify an area of struggle in your life. Instead of focusing on the sin, practice "walking by the Spirit" by intentionally turning your attention to God's presence and power.
- Reflect on the spiritual gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 14:8-11. Ask God to show you how He might want to use you as a witness through these gifts.
- Share with the group next week about any experiences or insights you gained from being more intentional about relying on the Holy Spirit's power.

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

DAY 1

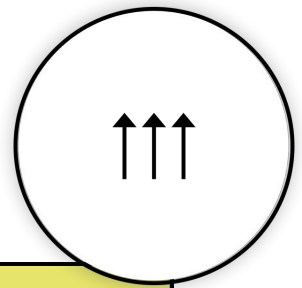
Embracing the Power of the Holy Spirit Acts 1:1-8

As we begin this journey, let's reflect on Jesus' final words to His disciples. He promised them a power beyond their human capabilities - the Holy Spirit. Just as the disciples were about to experience a transformative change at Pentecost, we too can experience this divine power in our lives. Today, take a moment to consider: Are there areas in your life where you feel powerless or inadequate? Invite the Holy Spirit to fill those spaces with His strength. Remember, the same power that turned Peter from a fearful denier to a bold proclaimer of Christ is available to you. Pray for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit in your life, and be open to the ways He might want to work through you.

REFLECTION



Participant



DAY 2

Born of the Spirit Reading: John 3:1-8, Titus 3:3-7

Today's readings remind us that our salvation is not of our own doing, but a miraculous work of the Holy Spirit. Just as Jesus explained to Nicodemus, we must be born of water and the Spirit to enter God's kingdom. This spiritual rebirth is a gift of God's mercy, not a result of our righteous acts. Reflect on your own journey of faith: Can you pinpoint a time when you felt this 'rebirth'? If you're struggling with feelings of unworthiness or doubt, remember that your salvation is secured not by your own efforts, but by God's grace through the Holy Spirit. Thank God for this incredible gift, and ask the Holy Spirit to continually renew your mind and heart.

REFLECTION

DAY 3

Walking in the Spirit Galatians 5:16-25

Paul presents us with a stark contrast between living by the flesh and living by the Spirit. The key to overcoming our sinful nature is not willpower alone, but walking closely with the Holy Spirit. Consider the areas in your life where you struggle with temptation or sin. Instead of focusing solely on avoiding these behaviors, shift your attention to cultivating a closer walk with the Spirit. What practical steps can you take today to be more attuned to the Spirit's guidance? Perhaps it's setting aside more time for prayer, meditation on Scripture, or simply being more mindful of God's presence throughout your day. Remember, as you focus on walking with the Spirit, He will empower you to live a life that reflects Christ.

REFLECTION

Participant

DAY 4

Knowing Jesus Through the Spirit John 16:5-15

Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would guide us into all truth and reveal more about Him to us. It's through the Spirit that our understanding of Jesus moves from mere information to deep, personal revelation. As you read today's passage, reflect on how the Holy Spirit has made Jesus more real to you. Have there been times when Scripture suddenly came alive, or when you felt a deep connection to Christ during worship? These are the workings of the Holy Spirit. Today, ask the Holy Spirit to deepen your knowledge and experience of Jesus. Be open to new insights as you read the Bible, and pay attention to those moments when you sense God's presence in a special way.

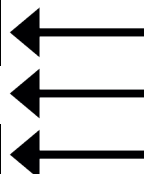
REFLECTION

DAY 5

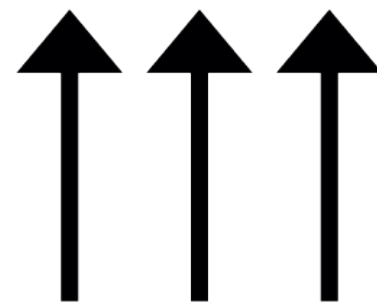
Empowered to Witness 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

The Holy Spirit empowers us not just for our own spiritual growth, but also to be effective witnesses for Christ. Today's reading outlines various spiritual gifts that the Holy Spirit distributes among believers. These gifts are not for personal glory, but for building up the church and pointing others to Jesus. Reflect on the gifts you may have received: How are you using them to serve others and share God's love? If you're unsure about your spiritual gifts, pray for the Holy Spirit to reveal and develop them in you. Remember, being a witness isn't just about what we say, but how we live our lives empowered by the Spirit. Ask God to help you be more aware of opportunities to be a witness in your daily life, relying on the Holy Spirit's power rather than your own abilities.

REFLECTION



Participant WEEK 5



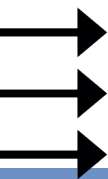
VIDEO

In this week's video Ps Ken DeHart shares our fourth core value: People Are Our Heart

NOTES

DISCUSSION

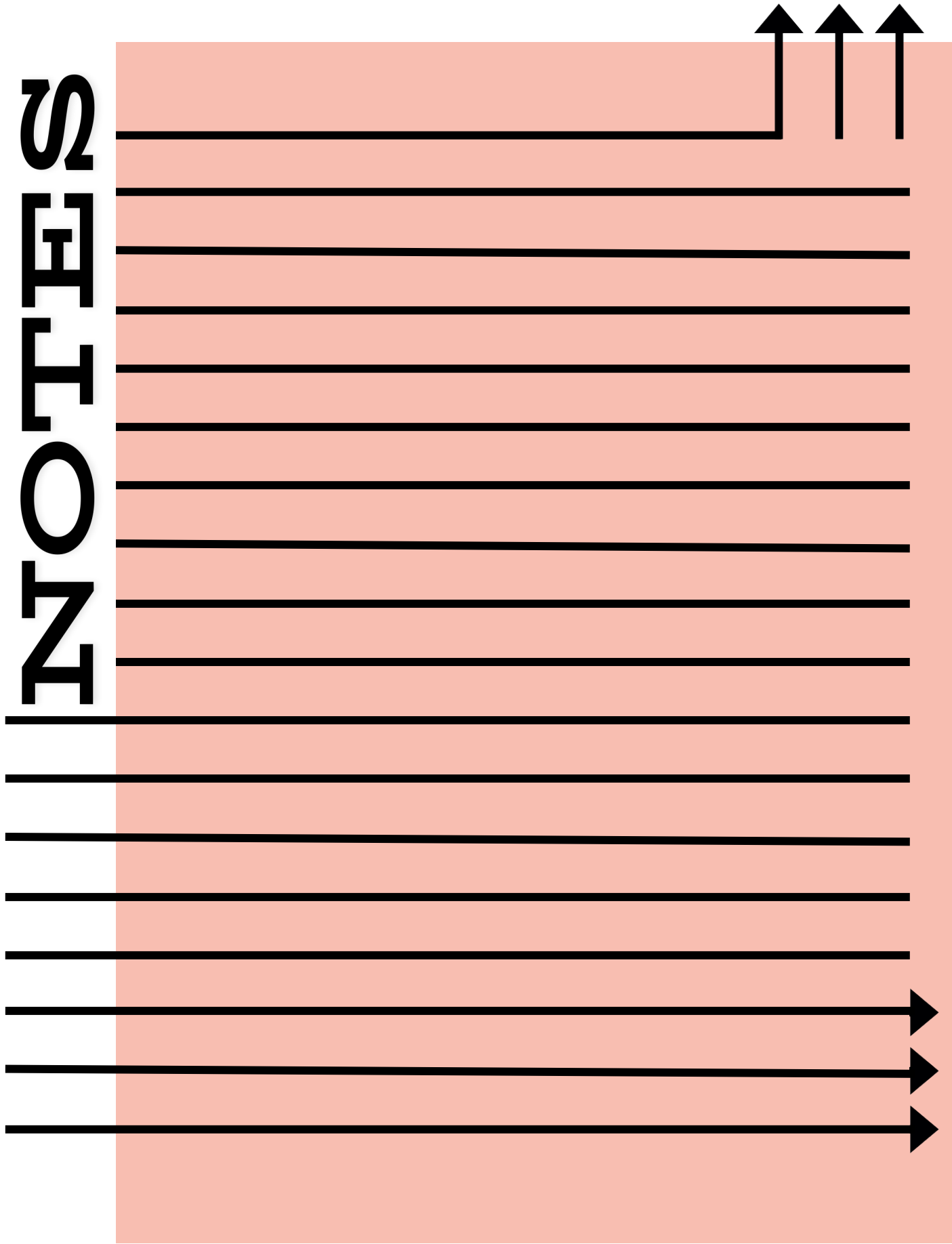
- How does your view of people align with God's perspective, and in what ways might you need to adjust how you see towards others?
- How can we balance seeing people as valuable in themselves versus seeing them as projects or means to an end in our outreach efforts?
- How can we cultivate a culture within our faith communities that prioritizes knowing people's names and treating them with personal care, as God does?
- How can we maintain an eternal perspective when interacting with people who may be difficult or different from us?



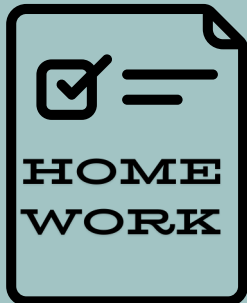
KEY TAKEAWAYS

- People are God's heart - we are created in His image for fellowship with Him.
- Loving God and loving people are inseparable.
- People are not projects - they are individuals to be valued and cared for personally.
- Godly community is a source of strength, healing, and growth.
- People have eternal value - our perspective should reflect this truth.

Participant



Participant



KEY SCRIPTURE

Matthew 22:39 Love your neighbor as yourself.

2 Corinthians 5:16 NLT So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now!

QUESTIONS...

Read **Genesis 1:26** and **Deuteronomy 6:4-9**. How do these passages shape our understanding of God's heart for people? How can we better reflect God's image in our interactions with others?

Read **1 John 1:7**, **Galatians 6:2**, **James 5:16**, **Proverbs 17:17**, **Proverbs 27:17**. How have you experienced the strength and support of godly community in your life?

What challenges do you face in loving your neighbor as yourself, and how can you overcome them?

RESPONSES...

Participant

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- This week, make an effort to learn the name of someone new in your neighborhood, workplace, or church.
- Identify one person in your life who you may have been treating as a "project." Pray for God's perspective on this person and think of ways to show them genuine care and friendship.
- Choose one way to strengthen your godly community this week (e.g., reach out to a friend, confess a struggle, offer support to someone in need).
- Share the gospel or your testimony with someone this week, keeping in mind their eternal value.

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

DAY 1

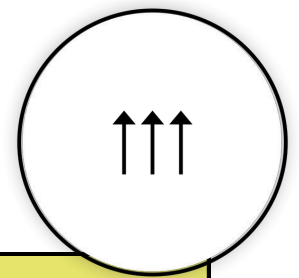
Made in God's Image Genesis 1:26-27, Psalm 139:13-16

As we reflect on being created in God's image, consider the profound implications this has for how we view ourselves and others. God intentionally crafted each of us with purpose and love. How does knowing you bear God's image change your self-perception? How might it transform the way you see and treat others? Today, practice seeing the divine imprint in everyone you encounter, recognizing their inherent worth as God's creation.

REFLECTION



Participant



DAY 2

Loving God and Neighbor Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Matthew 22:36-40

The Shema prayer and Jesus' addition to it form the foundation of our faith and practice. Loving God with our entire being naturally flows into loving our neighbors as ourselves. Reflect on how these two commandments are interconnected. How can your love for God be more fully expressed through your interactions with others? Choose one practical way to demonstrate love to a neighbor today, seeing it as an act of worship to God.

REFLECTION

DAY 3

Seeing People, Not Projects Matthew 25:31-46, James 2:1-13

Jesus teaches us to see Him in the faces of those in need. It's easy to turn outreach into a checklist, but God calls us to genuine relationship. How might your approach to serving others change if you truly saw Christ in them? Consider a time when someone made you feel valued as a person, not a project. How can you extend that same dignity to others? Today, make an effort to learn someone's name and story, treating them as Jesus would.

REFLECTION

Participant

DAY 4

Strength in Community Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, Hebrews 10:24-25

God designed us for community, knowing we draw strength from one another. Reflect on the times when fellow believers have supported you through challenges. How has this fellowship deepened your faith? Consider areas in your life where you might need to be more vulnerable with trusted friends. How can you create space for others to share their burdens with you? Today, reach out to encourage a fellow believer or seek support if you're struggling.

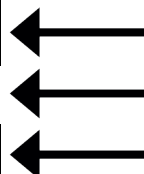
REFLECTION

DAY 5

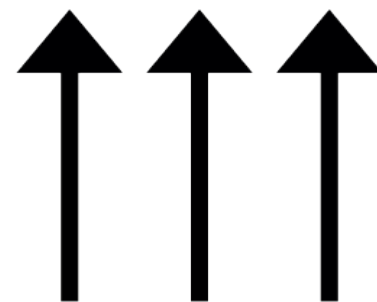
An Eternal Perspective 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, Colossians 3:1-4

Understanding the eternal nature of our souls radically shifts our priorities. How does an eternal perspective change the way you view your daily life and interactions? Reflect on how this truth might impact your willingness to share your faith with others. Consider someone in your life who doesn't know Christ. How can you begin to see them through God's eternal lens? Pray for an opportunity to share God's love with them, remembering that your words and actions have eternal significance.

REFLECTION



Participant WEEK 6



VIDEO

In this week's video Ps Patrick Lander shares our fifth core value: Service Is Our Privilege

NOTES

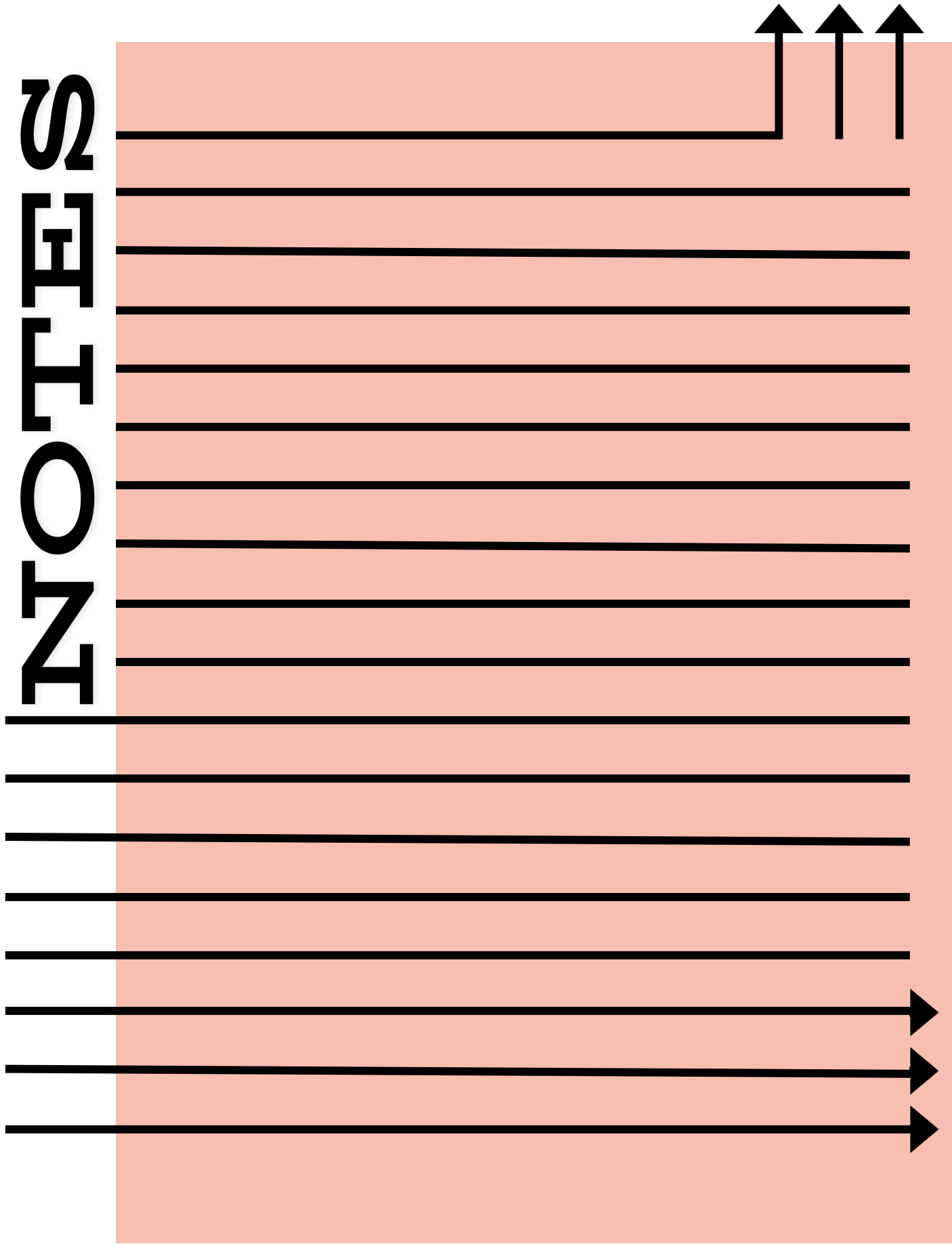
DISCUSSION

- How do you see the connection between serving and spiritual growth in your own life?
- Can you share an example of how serving has shaped you? How can we maintain joy and enthusiasm in serving, especially during challenging or mundane tasks?
- In what ways does serving others reflect Jesus' character? Can you share an example of when you've seen this in action?
- How do you see your spiritual gifts contributing to the building up of the Church? Are there areas where you feel you could be using your gifts more effectively?

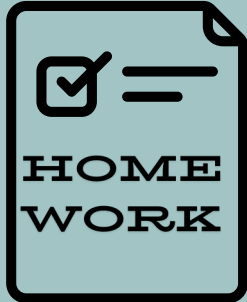
KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Serving is not an obligation but a privilege that brings us closer to God.
- We are called to serve cheerfully, reflecting God's love in tangible ways.
- Our service is always rewarded, both in this life and eternity.
- Serving reflects our identity in Christ and demonstrates true greatness in God's Kingdom.
- Our service builds and strengthens the Body of Christ.

Participant



Participant



KEY SCRIPTURE

1 Peter 4:9 -10 (NLT) Cheerfully share your home with those who need a meal or a place to stay. God has given each of you a gift from His great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.

1 Corinthians 15:58 (AMPC) Therefore, my beloved brethren, be firm (steadfast), immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing and being continually aware that your labor in the Lord is not futile—it is never wasted or to no purpose.

QUESTIONS...

Reflect on 1 Peter 4:9-10. How can we apply the principle of cheerful hospitality to other areas of service in the church and our daily lives?

.....

Reflect on 1 Corinthians 15:58. How does knowing that our labor in the Lord is never in vain impact your motivation to serve?

.....

What steps can you take to discover or rediscover your unique role in serving and building up the Body of Christ?

RESPONSES...

Participant

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- Identify a spiritual gift you possess. Brainstorm three ways you could use this gift to serve others in the coming month.
- If you're not currently serving, prayerfully consider where God might be calling you to serve. Take a step towards getting involved this week.
- For those already serving, reflect on your current area of service. Is there a way you can elevate your commitment or enthusiasm in this role?
- As a group, discuss potential service projects you could do together that would build up the Body of Christ and reflect Jesus' love to your community.

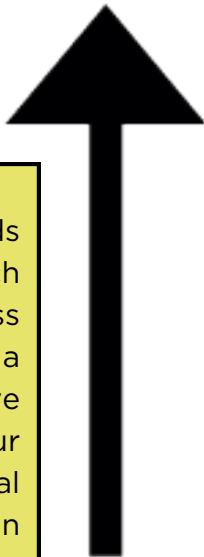
DAILY DEVOTIONAL

DAY 1

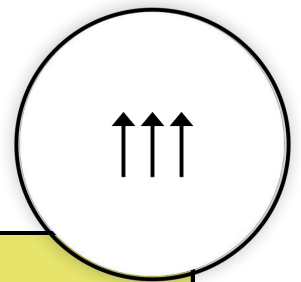
The Joy of Serving 1 Peter 4:7-11

As we reflect on the privilege of service, let's consider Peter's words about using our gifts to serve others. God has uniquely equipped each of us with abilities and talents, not for our own benefit, but to bless others and glorify Him. Today, ponder how you can serve others with a cheerful heart. Remember, it's not about the task itself, but the love and joy behind it. How can you infuse more enthusiasm into your service, whether it's at church, work, or home? Ask God to reveal opportunities where you can use your gifts to make a difference in someone's life today.

REFLECTION



Participant



DAY 2

The Eternal Impact of Service 1 Corinthians 15:58

Paul reminds us that our labor in the Lord is never in vain. Sometimes we may feel our efforts go unnoticed or seem insignificant, but God sees every act of service. Reflect on times when you've felt discouraged in your service. How does knowing that God values your faithfulness change your perspective? Consider the eternal impact of even the smallest acts of kindness or service. Today, commit to serving not for earthly recognition, but for the joy of partnering with God in His work. Ask Him to help you see the value in every task, no matter how small it may seem.

REFLECTION

DAY 3

Servant Leadership Matthew 20:25-28

Jesus redefined greatness through His example of servant leadership. In a world that often equates success with power and prestige, Christ calls us to a different standard. How does Jesus' example challenge your own definition of greatness? Reflect on areas in your life where you can embody this servant-hearted approach. Whether at home, work, or in your community, look for opportunities to put others first. Pray for God to cultivate a heart of humility and selflessness in you, mirroring Christ's example.

REFLECTION

Participant

Unity in Service Ephesians 4:11-16

DAY 4

Paul paints a beautiful picture of the Church working together, each part doing its share. Consider your role in the Body of Christ. How are you contributing to the growth and unity of your local church? Reflect on your unique gifts and how they complement others in your faith community. Today, pray for a deeper sense of connection with fellow believers. Ask God to show you how your service can strengthen the Church and advance His Kingdom. Consider reaching out to someone in your church to encourage them in their service or to explore how you can serve together.

REFLECTION

Serving with God's Strength 1 Peter 4:10-11

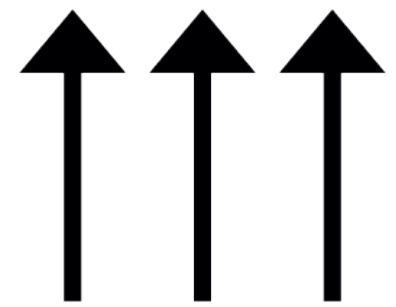
DAY 5

As we conclude this week's reflections on service, Peter reminds us that we serve with the strength God provides. This takes the pressure off us to perform and instead allows us to rely on God's power working through us. Reflect on times when you've felt inadequate in your service. How does knowing that God's strength is available to you change your approach? Today, before you engage in any act of service, take a moment to acknowledge your dependence on God. Ask Him to fill you with His strength and to work through you. Remember, when we serve in His power, He receives all the glory.

REFLECTION



Participant WEEK 7



VIDEO

In this week's video Isaac Pyo shares our sixth core value: Generosity Is Our Lifestyle

NOTES

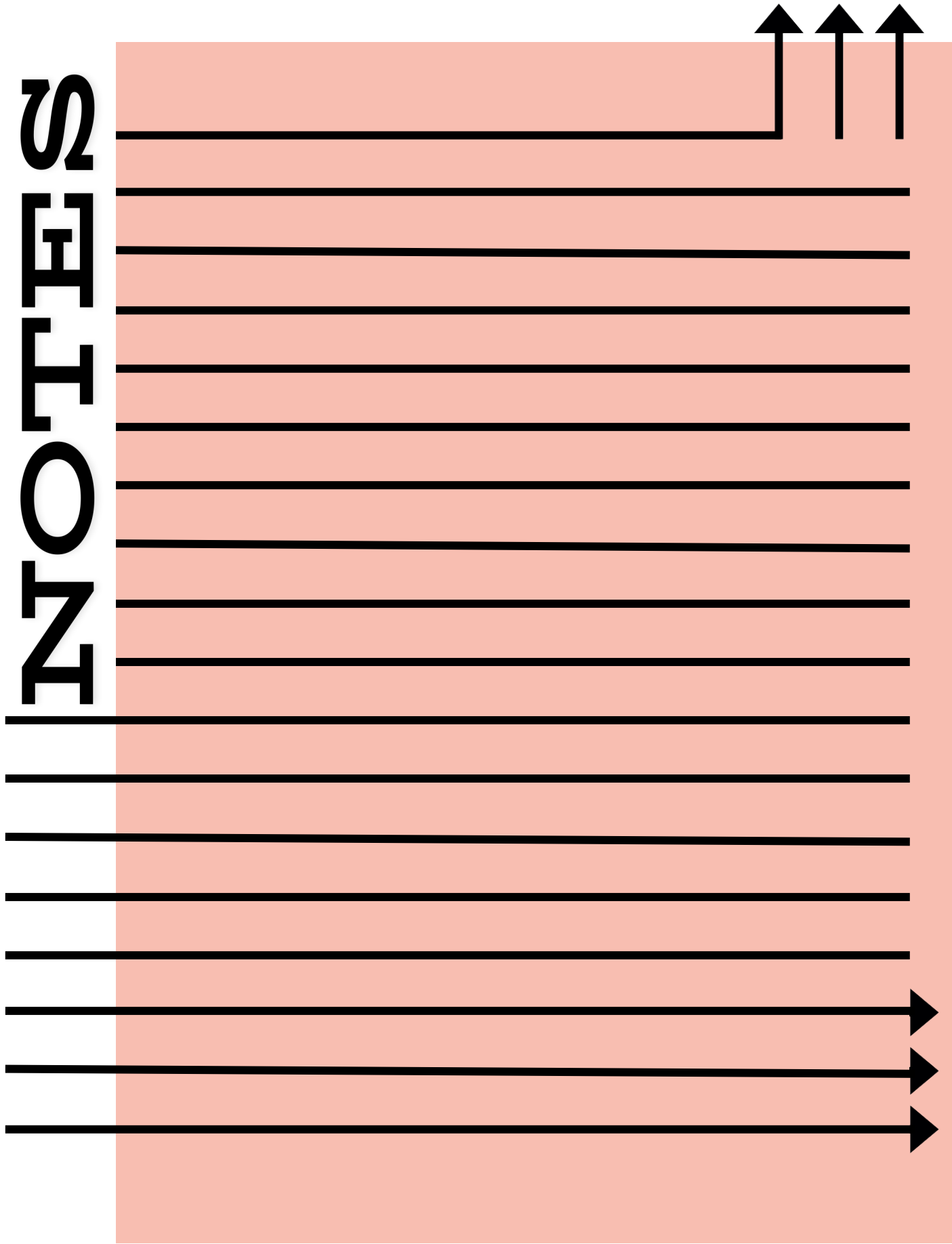
DISCUSSION

- Reflect on a time when someone's simple act of generosity made a significant impact on you. What made it meaningful?
- What are some potential barriers that prevent us from being consistently generous, and how can we overcome them?
- How does Jesus' example of generosity challenge or inspire you to live differently? What areas of your life might need to change to better reflect His generous nature?
- How does the concept of generosity as a 'lifestyle' rather than occasional acts change our approach to giving and serving others?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- True prosperity encompasses more than financial success; it includes overall well-being and flourishing.
- Generosity is a win-win situation, blessing both the giver and the receiver.
- Our relationship with Jesus is foundational to developing a generous lifestyle.
- Generosity doesn't always require grand gestures; simple, everyday acts can make a significant difference.

Participant



Participant



KEY SCRIPTURE

Proverbs 11:25 NIV A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.

QUESTIONS...

In what ways have you experienced the truth of Proverbs 11:25 in your own life, where being generous led to personal prosperity or refreshment?

.....

What are some practical ways we can 'abide in Jesus' as mentioned in John 15:4, and how might this impact our ability to live generously?

.....

In light of 2 Corinthians 8:9, how does understanding Jesus' ultimate act of generosity on the cross motivate us to be more generous in our daily lives?

RESPONSES...

Participant

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- Daily Generosity Challenge: For the next week, commit to performing at least one act of generosity each day. Keep a journal of these acts and their impacts.
- Abiding in Jesus: Develop a plan to strengthen your relationship with Jesus through prayer, Bible study, or worship. How can this help cultivate generosity?
- Generosity Audit: Reflect on your use of time, talents, and resources. Identify areas where you could be more generous and make a plan to act on one of these.
- Pay It Forward: Choose one simple act of generosity from the list in the sermon (or come up with your own) and do it this week. Encourage the recipient to pass it on.

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

DAY 1

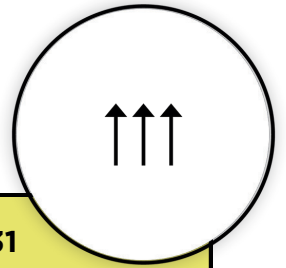
The Heart of Generosity 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

As we begin this journey exploring generosity, let's reflect on its true source. Paul commends the Macedonian churches for their extreme generosity despite their severe poverty. Their secret? They gave themselves first to the Lord (v.5). True generosity flows from a heart surrendered to God. When we grasp the immense generosity of Christ, who "though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor" (v.9), it transforms our perspective on giving. Today, consider: How can you give yourself more fully to the Lord? In what areas of your life might God be calling you to be more generous?

REFLECTION



Participant



DAY 2

Refreshing Others, Refreshing Ourselves Proverbs 11:24-31

Today's reading includes our key verse: "A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed" (v.25). This proverb reveals a profound spiritual principle: generosity leads to abundance, not scarcity. When we give freely, we participate in God's economy of blessing. Like a farmer scattering seed, our generous acts multiply and return to us. Reflect on a time when your generosity unexpectedly blessed you in return. How might you "refresh" someone today through a simple act of kindness or generosity?

REFLECTION

DAY 3

Abiding in Christ, the Source of True Generosity John 15:1-17

Jesus teaches us that fruitfulness in our spiritual lives, including generosity, comes from abiding in Him. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit by itself, we cannot sustain a truly generous lifestyle without remaining connected to Christ, our source. Abiding involves spending time with Jesus through prayer, Scripture, and worship. As we do, His character - including His generous nature - begins to flow through us. Today, set aside extra time to "abide" with Jesus. Ask Him to align your heart with His and to show you opportunities for generosity that you might otherwise miss.

REFLECTION

Participant

DAY 4

Generosity in All Circumstances Acts 2:42-47

The early church modeled radical generosity, selling possessions to meet each other's needs. This lifestyle flowed from their devotion to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer (v.42). Their generosity wasn't limited to finances but extended to sharing meals, praising God together, and enjoying the goodwill of all people. How might this example challenge your current practice of generosity? Consider one way you could extend generosity beyond finances today - perhaps through your time, skills, or hospitality.

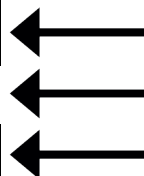
REFLECTION

DAY 5

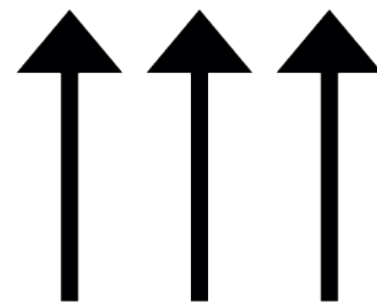
The Ultimate Act of Generosity Romans 5:6-11

As we conclude our week, we focus on the ultimate act of generosity: Christ's sacrifice for us. While we were still sinners - unable to offer anything in return - Christ died for us. This selfless act defines true generosity: giving without expectation of return, motivated by love. Spend time meditating on the enormity of this gift. How does Christ's generosity toward you inspire you to be more generous to others? Ask God to help you see opportunities to reflect His generous love to those around you, especially to those who may not be able to repay you.

REFLECTION



Participant WEEK 8



VIDEO

In this week's video Ps Mary Capper shares our seventh and final core value: Flourishing Is Our Goal

NOTES

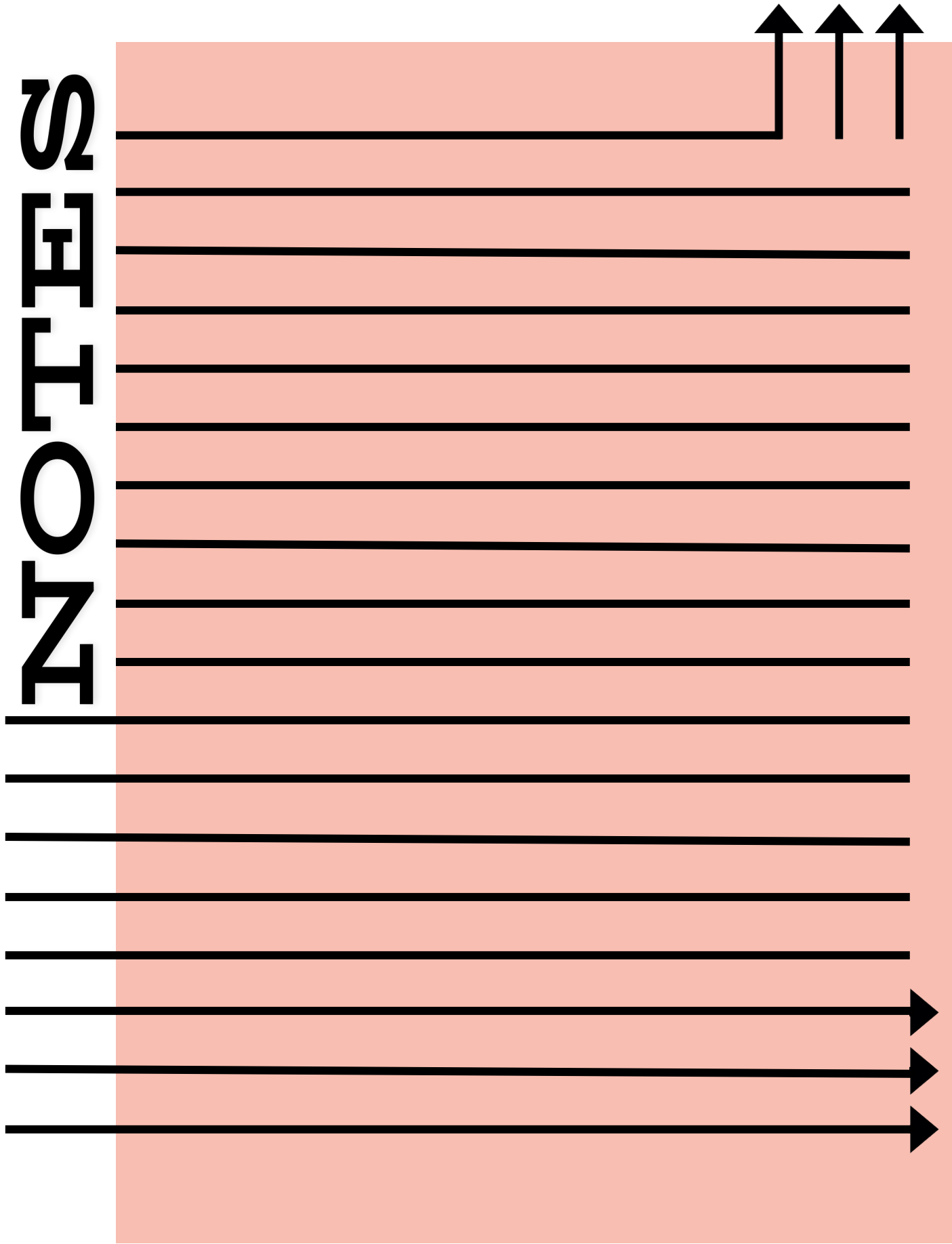
DISCUSSION

- In what ways have you experienced the impact of your environment on your ability to flourish spiritually? How might you intentionally 'plant' yourself in the house of God?
- In what areas of your life do you find it most challenging to remain connected to Jesus as the 'true vine'? How might you strengthen that connection?
- How can we balance accepting God's pruning in our lives while also pursuing growth and flourishing?
- The message mentions that our flourishing is not just for us, but to declare God's character to others. How can your personal growth impact those around you?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Flourishing is about thriving in every area of our lives—spiritually, emotionally, and relationally.
- Our environment significantly impacts our ability to flourish.
- Flourishing requires intentional planting and positioning in God's presence.
- The purpose of our flourishing is to declare God's character and presence in our lives.

Participant



Participant



KEY SCRIPTURE

Ps 92:12-13 NIV The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; 13planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God.

QUESTIONS...

Psalm 92:12-15 describes the righteous person flourishing like a palm tree. What characteristics of a flourishing tree do you aspire to have in your spiritual life?

Read the list of fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). Which of these do you see growing in your life? Which ones do you want to cultivate more?

Read 2 Corinthians 6 (MSG). What does it mean to you to "live openly and expansively"? What might be holding you back?

RESPONSES...

Participant

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- **Spiritual Environment Audit:** Take time this week to evaluate your spiritual environment. Identify one positive change you can make to foster growth (e.g., joining a Bible study, finding an accountability partner, or establishing a regular prayer time).
- **Fruit-Bearing Challenge:** Choose one fruit of the Spirit to focus on this week. Journal daily about opportunities to cultivate this characteristic in your life.
- **Declaration of Faith:** Write a short testimony of how God has helped you flourish in an area of your life. Share it with the group next week or with someone who needs encouragement.

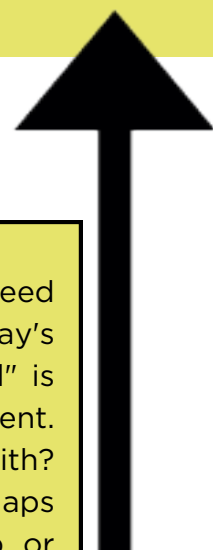
DAILY DEVOTIONAL

DAY 1

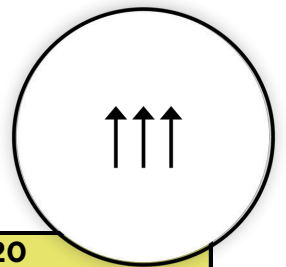
Planted to Flourish Psalm 92:12-15, John 15:1-5

Just as a tree needs to be planted in good soil to thrive, we too need to be rooted in the right environment to flourish spiritually. Today's readings remind us that being "planted in the house of the Lord" is essential for our growth. Reflect on your current spiritual environment. Are you surrounded by people and influences that nurture your faith? Consider how you can deepen your roots in God's presence, perhaps through more consistent church attendance, joining a small group, or creating daily habits that keep you connected to Christ, the true vine. Remember, apart from Him, we can do nothing, but when we remain in Him, we bear much fruit.

REFLECTION



Participant



DAY 2

The Power of Community Hebrews 10:24-25, Proverbs 13:20

Today's passages highlight the importance of community in our spiritual journey. The people we surround ourselves with have a profound impact on our growth and character. Take a moment to evaluate your circle of friends and acquaintances. Do they encourage you to grow closer to God? Do they challenge you to live out your faith? Consider how you can be intentional about building relationships with wise, godly individuals who will spur you on towards love and good deeds. At the same time, reflect on how you can be that positive influence for others, encouraging them in their faith journey.

REFLECTION

DAY 3

Day 3: Pruning for Growth John 15:1-2, Galatians 5:22-23

The process of pruning can be painful, but it's essential for healthy growth and abundant fruit-bearing. In our spiritual lives, God often prunes away things that hinder our growth - habits, attitudes, or relationships that don't align with His will. Reflect on areas in your life where you might be experiencing God's pruning. Are there things you need to let go of to make room for more spiritual fruit? Ask the Holy Spirit to help you identify these areas and give you the strength to embrace the pruning process. Remember, the end result is a life that bears the beautiful fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

REFLECTION

Participant

DAY 4

Declaring God's Character Psalm 92:15, John 14:6

As followers of Christ, our lives should be a testament to God's character. When we flourish spiritually, we naturally declare God's goodness, justice, and love to the world around us. Reflect on how your life currently reflects God's nature. Are there areas where your actions or attitudes might be misrepresenting who God is? Ask the Lord to help you align your life more closely with His truth and character. Consider practical ways you can intentionally demonstrate God's love, justice, and grace in your daily interactions with others, becoming a living declaration of who He is.

REFLECTION

DAY 5

Living an Expansive Life 2 Corinthians 6:11-13, John 10:10

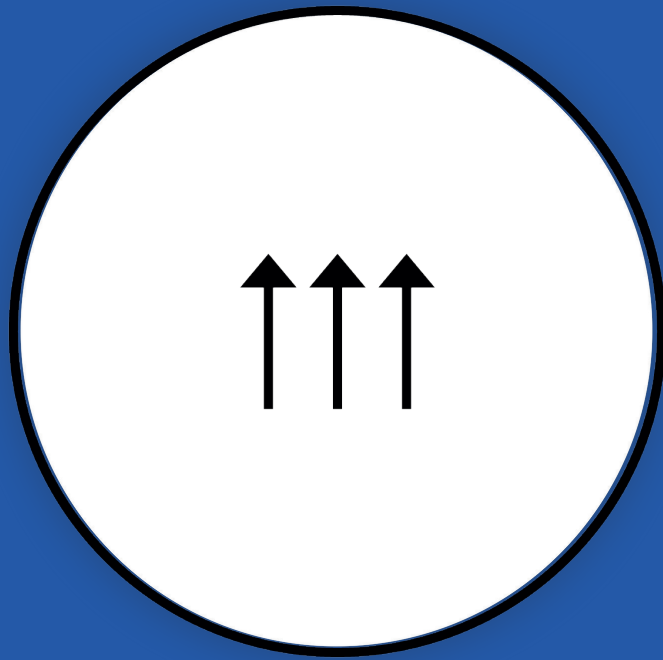
God calls us to live expansive, abundant lives that reflect His glory and goodness. Yet often, we find ourselves living in a "small way," constrained by fear, doubt, or complacency. Today's readings challenge us to open up our lives and embrace the fullness God offers. Reflect on areas where you might be holding back or living small. What fears or limitations are you allowing to restrict your spiritual growth or your impact for God's kingdom? Ask the Holy Spirit to help you break free from these constraints and to give you the courage to live openly and expansively for Christ. Consider one step you can take today to move towards a more abundant life in Him.

REFLECTION



It's time to
GO HIGHER





Small Group Leader's Guide

A
Higher
Place