

# GRIP GUIDE

FALL 2025



A SEASON OF DISCIPLESHIP

# GRIP Discipleship

## Fall 2025



**When my heart is gripped by God's hands...**

*"Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit." (Luke 23:46)*

**then my hands will do what's on God's heart!**

*"I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." (John 8:29)*

### ———— DATES ————

**Aug 25 (SG)\***

**Sep 8**

**Sep 29 (SG)\***

**Oct 20**

**Nov 10 (SG)\***

**Dec 1**

**\* SG = Meet with your GRIP small group off-site**

# **My Grip Team**

# My GRIP Commitment

## I am willing to take ownership of my spiritual growth by

- ☐ watching the 'Introduction to GRIP' video. I understand and agree with the commitment
- ☐ pursuing God with unhurried times alone with Him in His Word, including journaling & prayer, at least 5 days/week
- ☐ deliberately pursuing the action points God puts on my heart
- ☐ attending the 6 GRIP gatherings (~once every 3 weeks)  
**8/25(SG) 9/8 9/29(SG) 10/20 11/10(SG) 12/1**
- ☐ setting aside 4 hours for a personal retreat to listen to God about some life action points

## I am ready to commit myself to the spiritual success of one other man by

- ☐ meeting with my GRIP partner at least once between each gathering (large group or small group) for the purpose of encouragement, challenge, accountability, and prayer
- ☐ doing my part to build up the men in my small group

## My sharing during small group times will be

**Real** (authentic, “no bologna zone”)

**Focused** (on topic)

**Brief** (so others can share too)

## Come to the Cross

“Come to the Cross” is Focused Living’s way of saying, “Let’s align our hearts with the gospel.” Usually, the “Come to the Cross” devotion focuses on a gospel-rich truth. Through reflection, we give the Holy Spirit room to “hit the gospel refresh button” in our hearts so we are once again in awe of the wonders of our salvation. Then we respond through a time of heartfelt prayer.

### Read Ephesians 2:1-10

1. **What one aspect of this gospel summary grabs my heart?**
  - *What do these verses say about my life before God saved me?*
  - *According to these verses who was the most active one in my salvation?*
  - *Why has God saved me? (Now what? What is the “why” of my salvation?)*
2. **Why am I here? Why did I commit to GRIP this season?**

## The Heart and Vision behind GRIP Discipleship

- **Abundant life has been made possible and directly offered to us.**

**John 7:37-38** – “On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “**If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’**”

*(Put your full trust in Me, enthrone Me in your heart, and life and abundance will flow out.)*

**John 10:10** - “**The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly**”

*(the absolute fulness of life, real, genuine and blessed).*

**Is the life I’m living the life I most deeply desire? Is this it?**

- **Living the life that God has for us takes effort and intention.**

**Matthew 7:13-14** “**Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.**”

**Luke 13:24** “**Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.**”

“Grace is not opposed to *effort*, it’s opposed to *earning*.” D. Willard

Our effort is to do what we *can* do—make space to surrender to God via spiritual rhythms—so God can do what we *can’t* do: heal, liberate, and transform us into His likeness.

**Am I ready to fight for the life God has for me?**

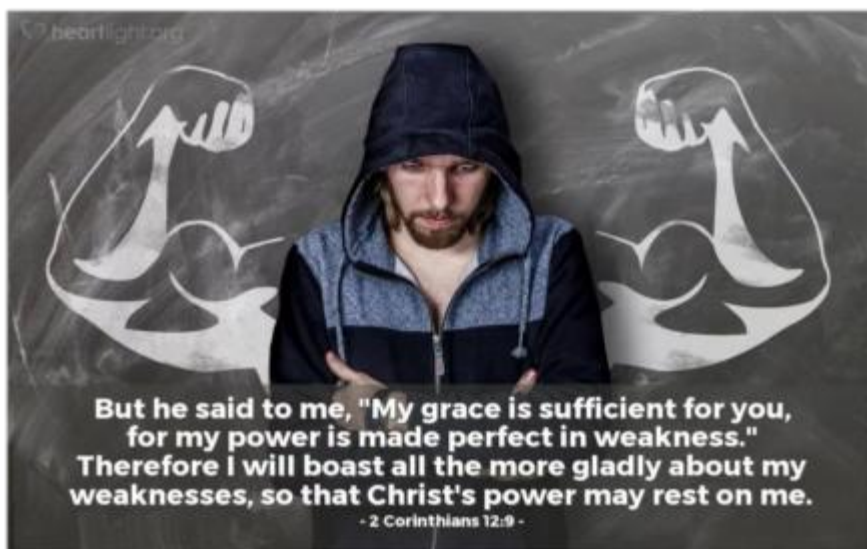
*(2Cor10:3, Rom7:23, 1Tim 6:12, Heb 12:1)*

- **Spiritual growth (fruit) comes only as we abide in Christ and His love.**

**John 15:4** “**Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.**”

“Transformation is possible if we are willing to arrange our lives around the practices, rhythms, and truths that Jesus himself did, which will open our lives to God’s power to change.” J. M. Comer

**What am I doing to embrace the nearness of God?**



But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you,  
for my power is made perfect in weakness."  
Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my  
weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

- 2 Corinthians 12:9 -

# Details of the Bible Reading Plan

## Fall 2025

### SECTION 1

Titus  
(2 weeks)

#### **Week 1** 08/24

**Day 1** Titus (Read entire letter in one sitting ~7min)

**Day 2** Titus 1:1-9

**Day 3** Titus 1:10-2:10

**Day 4** Psalm 1

**Day 5** Titus 2:11-15

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#### **Week 2** 08/31

**Day 1** Digging Deeper: Titus 2:11-12

**Day 2** Titus 3:1-7

**Day 3** Titus 3:8-15

**Day 4** Psalm 19

**Day 5** Drawing Near

- 
- Met with GRIP partner since last GRIP gathering
  - Ready to attend GRIP Gathering #2 on September 8, 2025



## **SECTION 2**

### The Hand: Key Relationships and Key Resources (3 weeks)

#### **Week 3 09/07 Listening to God about my Key Relationships**

<b>Day 1</b>	God	Malachi 1:6-14
<b>Day 2</b>	Wife (Family)	1Peter 2:21-25; 3:7-12
<b>Day 3</b>	Children (Family)	Proverbs 20:7; Deuteronomy 6:5-9
<b>Day 4</b>	Disciple	Romans 15:23-24, 32
<b>Day 5</b>	Friend	1Corinthians 10:27 – 11:1

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#### **Week 4 09/14 Listening to God about my Key Resources**

<b>Day 1</b>	Heart	Proverbs 3:1; 17:3; 21:2; 4:23; 28:13
<b>Day 2</b>	Time	Ps 139:16; 103:15-16; 90:12; Eph 2:10
<b>Day 3</b>	Health	Proverbs 3:5-8; 1Cor 11:27-30
<b>Day 4</b>	Wealth	Matthew 19:16-26
<b>Day 5</b>	Vocation	1Peter 4:10-11; Romans 12:4-8

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#### **\*PERSONAL RETREAT (~4 Hours)**

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#### **Week 5 09/21 Ephesians**

<b>Day 1</b>	Ephesians 1:1-14
<b>Day 2</b>	Ephesians 1:15-23
<b>Day 3</b>	Ephesians 2:1-10
<b>Day 4</b>	Refresh
<b>Day 5</b>	Retreat Summary - Key 3 Action Points

- Completed my personal retreat
- Identified my Key 3 Action Points and have shared these with my GRIP partner (grip.focusedliving.com WebApp)
- Met with GRIP partner since last GRIP gathering
- Ready to attend GRIP Gathering #3 on September 29, 2025

## **SECTION 3**

### Prospering My Key Relationships (3 weeks)

#### **Week 6 09/28 Ephesians**

**Day 1** Ephesians 2:11-22

**Day 2** Ephesians 3:1-13

**Day 3** Ephesians 3:14-21

**Day 4** Psalm 23

**Day 5** Ephesians 4:1-16

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#### **Week 7 10/05 Ephesians**

**Day 1** Ephesians 4:17-32

**Day 2** Ephesians 5:1-21

**Day 3** Ephesians 5:22-33

**Day 4** Ephesians 6:1-9

**Day 5** Psalm 25

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#### **Week 8 10/12 Walking in Humility**

**Day 1** Ephesians 6:10-24

**Day 2** Digging Deeper: “Walk”

**Day 3** Scripture Memory

**Day 4** Psalm 104

**Day 5** Action Points Refresh

- 
- Met with GRIP partner since last GRIP gathering
  - Made progress on Action Points
  - Ready to attend GRIP Gathering #4 on October 20, 2025

## **SECTION 4**

### Prospering My Key Relationships (3 weeks)

#### **Week 9 10/19 1Timothy**

**Day 1** 1Timothy 1:1-11

**Day 2** 1Timothy 1:12-20

**Day 3** Digging Deeper: Chief of sinners

**Day 4** 1Timothy 2:1-15

**Day 5** Psalm 121

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#### **Week 10 10/26 1Timothy**

**Day 1** 1Timothy 3

**Day 2** 1Timothy 4

**Day 3** 1Timothy 5:1-16

**Day 4** Scripture Memory

**Day 5** Psalm 127 & 128

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#### **Week 11 11/02 1Timothy**

**Day 1** 1Timothy 5:17-6:5

**Day 2** 1Timothy 6:6-20

**Day 3** Psalm 139

**Day 4** Drawing Near

**Day 5** Life Assignment

- Met with GRIP partner since last GRIP gathering
- Made progress on my Key 3 Action Points
- Ready to attend GRIP Gathering #5 on November 10, 2025

## **SECTION 5**

### My Diet in God's Word (3 weeks)

#### **Week 12** 11/09

- Day 1** The Word of God in My Life  
**Day 2** My Plan for Bible Reading the next 2 weeks  
**Day 3** My Diet in God's Word  
**Day 4** My Diet in God's Word  
**Day 5** My Diet in God's Word
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#### **Week 13** 11/16

- Day 1** My Diet in God's Word  
**Day 2** My Diet in God's Word  
**Day 3** My Scripture Memory Verse  
**Day 4** My Diet in God's Word  
**Day 5** My Diet in God's Word
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#### **Week 14** 11/23

- Day 1** My Diet in God's Word  
**Day 2** My Diet in God's Word  
**Day 3** My Diet in God's Word  
**Day 4** Reflecting Back  
**Day 5** Reflecting Back & Looking Ahead

- Met with GRIP partner since last GRIP gathering
- Made progress on my Key 3 Action Points
- Ready to attend GRIP Gathering #6 on December 1, 2025

# Men Need a Plan

GRIP is a word that brings to mind a tight hold. God is in the business of getting a tight hold on our heart – transforming it and conforming it – so it becomes more and more like Jesus’ heart. As God grips our heart, we increasingly value the things that God values. Loving Him and loving others is at the Core of God’s heart.

As He grips our heart, God calls each of us to leverage our lives for His Kingdom. We at Focused Living believe that each Christ-following man can be leveraging his life towards at least one other man on an ongoing basis. For many of us, it’s the start of making Christ’s last command - make disciples - our first concern. So, ***who is your man and what is your plan?***

Who might God be calling you to walk alongside in this next season of your life? What potentially FATR man (Faithful, Available, Teachable, Reproducible) has God sovereignly placed in your circle (Church, Small Group, Ministry Team, Focused Living Men’s Forum, etc.)? Can you envision making yourself accessible to him, and finding a way to intentionally spur one another on toward maturity in Christ?

**Figure A** on the next page illustrates the variety of GRIP partnerships. Some GRIP pairings are between a spiritually more mature man (“Paul”) and a younger believer (“Timothy”). Other pairings are characterized by a mutual spiritual relationship like the Biblical example of “Barnabas and Paul” or “Onesiphorus & Paul” as they mutually strengthened each other’s hands. As a man progresses in his walk with Jesus, we strongly encourage the whole spectrum of intentional spiritual relationships in his life:

- 👉 **Timothy** – a man you are intentionally leading in discipleship
- 👉 **Barnabas / Onesiphorus** - a mutual relationship of intentionally spurring each other on
- 👉 **Paul** – a man who is intentionally discipling, mentoring, or coaching you.

The key word in all of these kinds of relationships is **intentionality**. Disciplers are intentional!

**Figure B** on the following page reflects the mindset of intentionally “moving a man to the right.” Followers become Disciplers and Disciplers become Leaders and Leaders grow in their domain of influence and become Kingdom Builders. In all these stages, spiritual maturity is marked by bringing others along with us.

Pursue a

**PAUL**

I Cor 11:1  
II Tim 2:1-6

Become a

**BARNABAS**

Acts 9:26-27;  
13:2, 42 (16x)

Become an

**ONESIPHORUS**

II Tim 1:15-18

**YOU**



- ◆ Encourage
- ◆ Challenge
- ◆ Pray

Teach/Train a

**TIMOTHY**

Acts 16:1; Phil 1:1;  
Col 1:1; I Thes 1:1;  
I Tim 1:2; 4:6-16;  
II Tim 2:1-6

Figure A

## Moving Men to the Right



Our mission is to help each man become so **FOCUSED** on the Person of Christ that he is passionately **LIVING** out the priorities of Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Figure B

*Once I have a man, now what? How do I actually 'walk alongside' him in his spiritual journey?* Without a plan, discipleship rarely moves from intention to reality. There are so many other things, often good things, vying for our time and energy. It's so easy to get distracted from that pursuit of investing in another man for spiritual growth and maturity. So, having some set of tracks is essential to not only starting the discipleship relationship, but fueling it forward.

GRIP is one set of tracks to assist you in your disciple-making efforts. It's not the only way. We don't even claim it's the best way. But, our way of doing it is better than your way of not doing it ☺. So, if you haven't landed on a way to intentionally relate to other men for the purpose of spiritual maturity and see them, in turn, multiply into other men, then we invite you to experience GRIP.

Bottom line: We know you have a lot of moving parts in your life. We feel called by God to **champion you as a discipler** and help you prioritize your obedience to the Great Commission reflected by investing in one other man!

The purpose of these pages that follow is to summarize GRIP discipleship. We want each man to enter in with his eyes wide open.



Will you catch the vision of  
investing in one man each year  
for the rest of your life?

# The Big Picture of GRIP

*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us. **Ephesians 1:7-8***

*“I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. **John 15:5***

*discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness... in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe... Take pains with these things... so that your progress will be evident to all. **1Timothy 4:7-15***

As we soak in the reality of God’s love and grace lavished on us, our love and affection for Him grows. We increasingly desire to put ourselves in a position, through abiding and through discipline, to let God GRIP our heart and conform us to Jesus.

Each season of GRIP discipleship emphasizes 3 core rhythms that position us for growth:

**Meeting with God** - Regular unhurried time alone with God in His Word and in prayer, abiding in His love and cultivating a heart that delights in obedience.

**Brother to Brother** – Regularly meet with at least one other brother where encouragement, challenge, and prayer can happen.

**Action Points** - Identify and pursue a few personal growth action points to align myself with God’s desire for the Key Relationships and Key Resources in my life.

Some men participating in GRIP are a long way down the road to owning these three core rhythms. Others have been exposed to them and perhaps have practiced them for short seasons in their past, but their lives are not currently characterized by them. For several men, these will be brand new practices. We have found that it takes three seasons of GRIP before a man personally owns the rhythms for himself AND has the motivation and confidence to actively invest in another man. Our prayer is that **this** GRIP season will help you gain traction in these three rhythms, and you will catch the vision of investing in one man each year for the rest of your life. Here’s a brief overview of these core rhythms.

## Rhythm #1 → Meeting with God

Apart from daily reading God's Word with a posture to know Him, love Him and obey Him, it's highly unlikely that a man will ever be a vibrant disciple, let alone a disciple maker (Ps 86:11; Ps 9:10; Jn 14:21).

God has graciously given us His special revelation in the Bible (2Tim 3:16). It's the **ONLY** source where you can learn God's character, learn God's Gospel, and learn who you are in Christ. As we read the Scriptures, they read us (Heb 4:12). The Holy Spirit ministers the Word to us as we read and reflect. He corrects our wrong thinking; He convicts us of sin; He reminds us of God's promises; He speaks courage to our heart; He makes our heart happy in the Lord! Why not make this season of GRIP discipleship your "stake in the ground" for personally owning the practice of regular unhurried time alone with God in His Word every day?

**Bible Reading Plan** Every Christ-following man needs to "feed himself" from God's Word. This GRIP guide will help you be in God's Word at least 5 X per week.

**Warning:** If you already have a robust daily Bible reading plan, don't attempt to "add" the GRIP reading plan on top of that. You're missing the point! Either set aside your plan for this season, **OR** journal from your plan and journal **1 day per week** from the GRIP reading plan.

**Journaling** Reading God's Word is a necessary start. But reading is not the same as meeting with God. Our goal in reading is communion with God and application of what He presses into our hearts. So, we will encourage you to **process** and **respond** to what you read by journaling. This looks different for each man. If you are new to journaling, try writing out a prayer of response after your time in the Word. On the next page you'll find templates that may help guide your journaling. We'll also provide some "prime the pump" questions for each Bible passage. Be curious about the text and ask your own questions.

**Passing On** To seal in God's Word, it's wise to regularly "pass on" one aspect of your time in God's Word with your family, GRIP partner, or someone else in your life. **EXPRESS** what God has **IMPRESSED** on your heart and mind.

## Ways to Process the Word

Below are a few approaches to help guide your times alone with God. Experiment with these and find a way that is most meaningful to you. Remember, the goal is to commune with Him. Ask, *“Lord, I’m listening. How do You want to grip my heart today?”*

### Approach 1

## WHO, WHAT, SO WHAT, NOW WHAT

### **WHO** are you addressing?

Always start your time in prayer with a reverent recognition that you are coming into the presence of your Eternal Father and Gracious Lord!

### **WHAT** is God saying?

Slowly read the passage 2X as if you were there. Feel the emotions; sense the relationships; smell the surroundings; hear the crowds. What did this mean to the original audience? Record insights, phrases, commands & promises that stand out.

### **SO WHAT** is God saying to you?

Stop to reflect and listen. What does it mean to you? What most grabbed your attention, stirred your mind or gripped your heart? Why?

### **NOW WHAT** is God asking you to do?

What will you do with the truth God has illumined to you? Write out a short, heartfelt prayer to the Lord in response to this time with Him.

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### Approach 2

## God and Me

**God** - As I read your Word today, what is it that You want me to learn and appreciate about You? (i.e., your character, your works, your ways)

**Me** - And what is it that You want me to learn today about myself and living as Your disciple?

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## Sacred Reading

(Lectio Divina)

### Lectio Divina (Sacred Reading)

This method of processing God's Word is especially useful when reading a shorter passage of scripture. You will be reading the same passage four times and entering into a time of silence between each reading. In the beginning of practicing lectio, you may want to give yourself 4 or 5 minutes between readings.

**READ (lectio)** the passage slowly and pay special attention to any words or phrases that stand out to you or that you stir you emotionally in any way.

**REFLECT (meditatio)** by slowly rereading the passage. This time lingering over the words or phrases that feel highlighted to you. As you turn them over slowly in your mind, ask God, "What do you want me to learn from this today?" Ask, "Why this word, why here, why now?"

**RESPOND (oratio)** Read the passage a third time and savor it. Let it move you to place yourself before the One who has invited you to intimate dialogue. "Lord, how are you inviting me to respond?" Speak from your heart.

**REST (contemplatio)** Sit quietly and simply look at God, looking at you, in love. Let the Holy Spirit speak to your heart. Let go of the text (mentally) and simply rest in God. Yield to His love and rest in His love.



## GRIP Scripture Memory

*My son, keep my words and treasure my commandments  
within you...write them on the tablet of your heart."*

Proverbs 7:1, 3b

*"You shall impress these words of mine on your heart and  
on your soul... You shall teach them to your sons..."*

Deuteronomy 11:18,19

*"Your word I have treasured in my heart that I may not sin  
against You."*

Psalms 119:11

Throughout this season of GRIP discipleship, you will be hiding some of God's Word in your heart through scripture memory. We do this so we will have God's Word when we need it the most. Some GRIP men will choose scripture memory as one of their action points for the season, choosing passages that are especially meaningful to them.

For many of us, it has been a long time since we committed anything to memory! We get it. GRIP is fueled by grace. Give yourself fully to the task, and God will be glorified and you will see growth. Use the Bible version with which you feel most comfortable. (In this guide, we will present the verses in the New American Standard version (NASB 1995) unless otherwise noted.



## Rhythm #2 → Brother to Brother

So, our first GRIP rhythm is “meeting with God”. The second GRIP rhythm is “brother to brother”. In many facets of men’s lives, community is a given. Men hunt together, play & watch sports together, work out together, do home improvement projects together, serve together, etc. However, when it comes to the Christian journey, many men have never learned how to do this **together**. It’s clear from the Bible that the life God calls us to is a life in community (2Tim 2:22; 1Thes 2:8). There’s the assumption that we will be walking this journey together. Christianity is a team sport. No contact, no impact. We must give at least a few men access to our everyday lives (2Tim 3:10).

*And He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him (Mk 3:14)...that I may be encouraged together with you...each of us by the other’s faith (Rom 1:12)...my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier (Phil 2:25)...Bear one another’s burdens (Gal 6:2)...Encourage one another day after day (Heb 3:13)...Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ (1Cor 11:1)...walk according to the pattern you have in us (Phil 3:17) ...pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart (2Tim 2:22).*

**Meet between GRIP gatherings** The backbone of GRIP is the face-to-face meeting of GRIP partners where they encourage, challenge, and pray for each other. Since the rhythm of GRIP gatherings is every three weeks, we expect that each GRIP partnership (pairing/triad) will meet face to face at least once between large gatherings. **The most successful GRIP partnerships find a way to connect every week.** Weekly phone calls also go a long way.

**Share Action Points** During the first month or so of GRIP you will have chosen “3 Key” action points. Here’s the sense behind action points: “God’s calling me to get traction in these areas and with His help I expect to make progress over the course of this season of discipleship.” It’s vital that you **share your action points** (i.e. steps of obedience) with your GRIP partner. In fact, discussing them may help you further refine them. Our WebApp makes sharing these easy: [grip.focusedliving.com](http://grip.focusedliving.com). Once shared, you and your partner can strengthen each other’s hands to follow through. Each action point becomes an accountability question that your GRIP partner can ask you.

**Pray** With your GRIP partner’s action points in hand, now you have specific ways to lift each other up in prayer. Make it a habit of praying for each other every time you meet.

## What To Do When We Meet as GRIP Partners?

No contact, no impact! There is no substitute for meeting nose to nose at least every other week to assess God's current grip on our heart. Weekly is best. This face-to-face time could be while working on a project together, driving to a ministry appointment, doing an errand together, enjoying some recreation, taking a prayer walk, sharing a meal together, etc. How you get together is totally up to you. It will probably be dictated by convenience and the rhythm of your lives. Just think of how many different situations, places, and times Jesus met His disciples! For those first disciples, class was always in session!



A conversation is an organic process. Most of the time it's natural to start a conversation with some small talk. Frequently there is a "hot off the press" situation or event that begs some attention. Any meaningful conversation between friends includes these facets. As GRIP partners, we want you to deliberately **add a few more elements to the typical conversation.**

- ✎ **Pass On Word** – Make it a habit to pass on one truth or insight that God has recently impressed on your heart. *What's God been impressing on you from His Word?* Having your GRIP Guide journal handy when you meet will be helpful.
- ✎ **Accountability** – Since the main purpose of GRIP is to help each other make progress in our spiritual journey **so we can love others better**, it's wise to give each other permission to poke to see how we are really doing. With your partner's Action Point list ("Key 3") at hand, ask questions like, *In what tangible way have you prioritized this action step? What progress did you make on this action step? What's going well? What else is going well? What can you improve? Where do you need help?* Listen, encourage, challenge, celebrate, and remind each other of the gospel.
- ✎ **Pray** – No prayer...no power! Always set aside some minutes to pray for each other in both successes and failures. If you meet for lunch, why not take a short prayer walk and pray in what you have just discussed.

## Rhythm #3 → Action Points

The third GRIP rhythm is identifying and pursuing a few “Action Points” that God will use to get an even better grip on our hearts. Early on in this GRIP discipleship season, we are asking you to set aside a four (4) hour block of time for a **personal retreat to hear from God**.

For some, this extended time with God will be new and unfamiliar. No worries! We’ll help. We have a whole section in the GRIP Guide to assist you. One result of this extended time of listening to God will be a short list of “Action Points” that God has put on your heart.

**Listen and Reflect** As you slow down in God’s presence to consider your life, we will provide a grid to help you think through the **KEY RELATIONSHIPS** and the **KEY RESOURCES** God has given you.

### Key Relationships



### Key Resources



We use the 5 fingers of a hand to represent these Key Relationships and Key Resources. An action point is the answer to this question: ***As I abide in Christ, what action can I pursue to better align myself with God’s desire for this Key Relationship or this Key Resource?***

It won’t take much pondering before you are aware of areas that need growth: attitudes, character areas, disciplines, sin habits, intentions never acted upon, etc.

**Write Down Your “Key 3” Action Points** As a result of this reflective time, you will write down a few action points. These actions represent specific ways to obey God in this season of your life. Each action point pursued will, directly or indirectly, lead you to better love God and better love others in your life. We suggest that you choose no more than 3 action points to focus on during the season.

## My HAND: Key Relationships

We have chosen the 'Hand' graphic because it is a useful way to visualize God's grip on our heart in order to live out His priorities as God's hands. In Matthew 22:34-40 Jesus teaches that the two greatest commands are to **love God** and **love others**. The thumb pointing upward represents our vertical love relationship with the Father. Likewise, the other four fingers pointing horizontally represent the priority relationships in which the Lord has called us to invest His love. The fingers on the HAND become a simple way to bring focus to our living and to bring our hearts more in line with what God values. Discipleship, then, is helping each other grow to become disciplined in living the relationships God values in the power of the Holy Spirit.



Depending on your season of life, God will call you to prioritize slightly different relationships. The Thumb (**God**), Ring (**Believer**) and Pinky (**Unbeliever**) fingers are non-negotiable relationships central to your life as a Christ-follower. The Pointer and Middle fingers represent family or family-like relationships. These vary from person to person and even vary in different seasons of life. If you are married, the Pointer finger (**Wife**) is non-negotiable, as is the Middle finger (**Children**) if you have children still living under your roof. Again, these are starting points for focusing your relational investments in this season of your life. Other examples of Key Relationships might be girlfriend, fiancé, siblings, aging parents, nieces, nephews, grandkids, roommate, etc.

One way to get a jump on GRIP is to answer this question: *In this season of my life, who are my Key HAND Relationships?*

Write their names on the graphic below.



**My HAND Relationships  
in this season of my life**

## My HAND: Key Resources

Most of us don't need convincing that these Hand relationships are Biblical, non-negotiable priorities of the Father. Though relationships are primary on God's heart, He has also given us stewardship over some key resources as well. Specifically, he wants us to manage our **heart**, our **time**, our **health**, our **wealth**, and our **vocation**. God's design is that our good stewardship of these resources will help us keep a good grip on our key relationships.

However, we have an enemy who longs to see us fail (2Cor 2:11). When one or more of these resource areas is out of alignment or neglected as to become unhealthy, then we start losing our grip on one or more of our key relationships. Wise GRIP partners will periodically help each other to examine these stewardship areas, especially if any key relationships seem to be stalled.



Here are a few examples of how poor stewardship of our Key Resources can have an adverse effect on our Key Relationships.

- If I am giving in to the temptation of porn (HEART) then the authenticity of my relationship with GOD and with my WIFE will suffer.
- If I am serving my church in 4 different ministries (TIME /VOCATION) then my relationship with my CHILDREN may suffer.
- If maintaining my material stuff (WEALTH) takes up my weekends, then I will probably miss opportunities to relate with my FRIENDS who are far from God.
- If my diet and exercise habits are sloppy (HEALTH), then I will lack energy to apply to the relationship areas.
- If my family is in debt and not living on a budget (WEALTH), then the stress level will go through the roof and hamper all my FAMILY relationships.
- If I hate my job (VOCATION), then I have little emotional margin to DISCIPLE another man until I figure out my job satisfaction issue.

Our stewardship of our Key Resources impacts, positively or negatively, the health of our Key Relationships. Each of our growth Action Points will somehow relate to the Key Relationship Hand or the Key Resource Hand.



## Evaluating the Season

100 days is a long enough period to expect to see some changes in your life. When a man finishes a season of discipleship, how does he know if it was a success?

**Success in discipleship is measured in love.**

The man who loves his Lord better **and** loves the people in his circle better had a successful season!



Yes, we hope that you...

- feel closer to God
- establish your rhythm of meeting with God in His Word
- make progress in your action steps
- experience your faith in Christ truly strengthened
- catch the vision, *“one man, each year, for the rest of your life”*

But here is a scary fact. It is possible to experience all of these without growing in your love for God and others! Jesus was very clear that love is our measuring stick for growth and maturity.

*“‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your **heart**, and with all your **soul**, [and with all your **might**] and with all your **mind**. This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘You shall love your **neighbor** as yourself.’” (Mt 22:37-40; Dt 6:5-6)*

In Jesus’ economy, **loving and serving others - out of a heart which is overwhelmed with God’s love - is the goal of discipleship**. How do I know if I’m loving God and loving others better than when I started? Well, here are two questions to ponder throughout this season:

- Am I quicker to obey God and do life His way? (John 14:21-24)
- Am I more active in taking the initiative, acting sacrificially, and meeting the real needs of others? (1Jn 4:10; Phil 2:3-4)

*Heavenly Father, would You grant me, according to the riches of Your glory, to come to a fuller realization of who I am in Christ – chosen, redeemed, forgiven, adopted, holy, and beloved! May You occupy the first place in my life. And overwhelmed with Your grace and love lavished on me in Christ, may I increasingly put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness and love. May those closest to me see the difference! May I truly live a life worth imitating.*

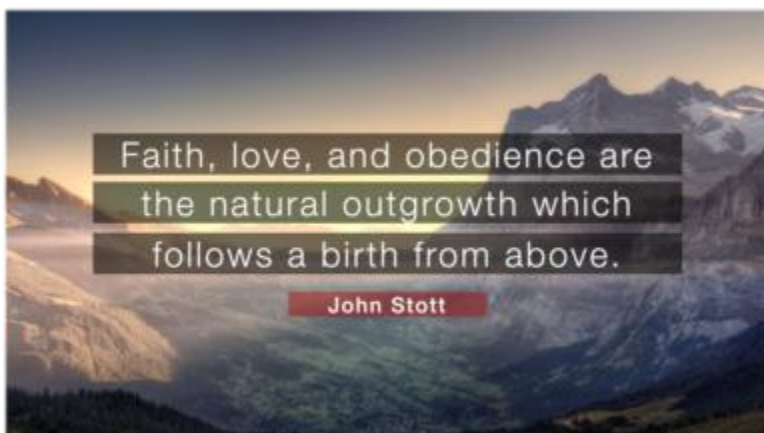
## Ready?

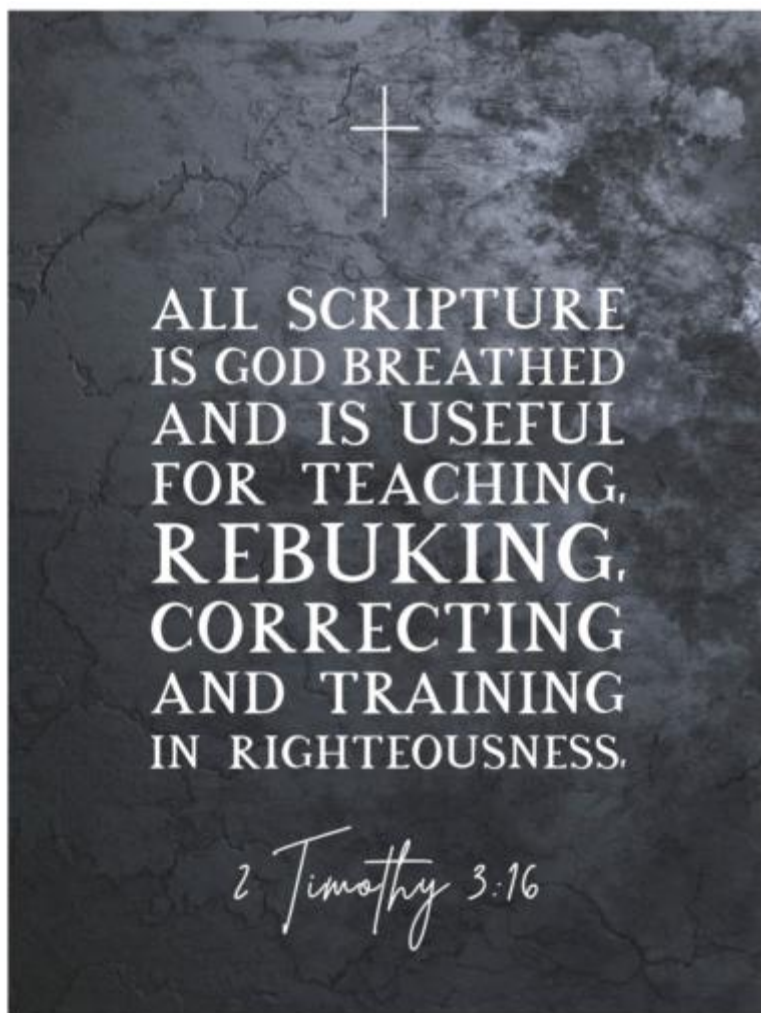
So, there you have it. GRIP is a vehicle to guide your spiritual journey with another man for a season. The concepts you've just read are also summarized in a short Introduction to GRIP video. Scan the QR code to view the video on YouTube.



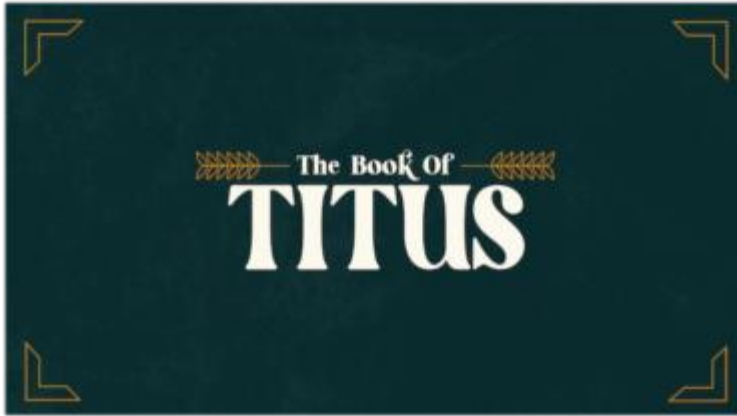
After reading this GRIP Introduction, we encourage you to discuss questions, concerns, fears, details with your potential GRIP partner.

- ✎ **What will each of you say “NO” to in order to say “YES” to walking the spiritual journey together?**
- ✎ **How do each of you envision your Key Relationships improving if you allowed God to really GRIP your heart?**
- ✎ **How will GRIP add value to your current involvement in your local church? In your Focused Living forum?**





# Section 1



## **Titus 2:11-12** (NIV)

11 For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people.

12 It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,

## Titus

The first two weeks of your Bible reading during this GRIP discipleship season will be in the book of Titus. We want you to get traction with this first rhythm of meeting with God over His Word.

The book of Titus is a brief, but powerful letter written by the Apostle Paul to his trusted companion, Titus. Paul had left Titus on the island of Crete to strengthen the new churches there and to appoint godly leaders.

In this letter, Paul gives practical instructions for building a healthy church community—one marked by truth, integrity, and lives transformed by the grace of God.

Titus reminds me that the gospel isn’t just about what I believe—it’s about how I live. Paul stresses that sound doctrine must lead to sound living. He speaks to men and women of all ages, encouraging them to live lives that reflect Christ and point others to Him.

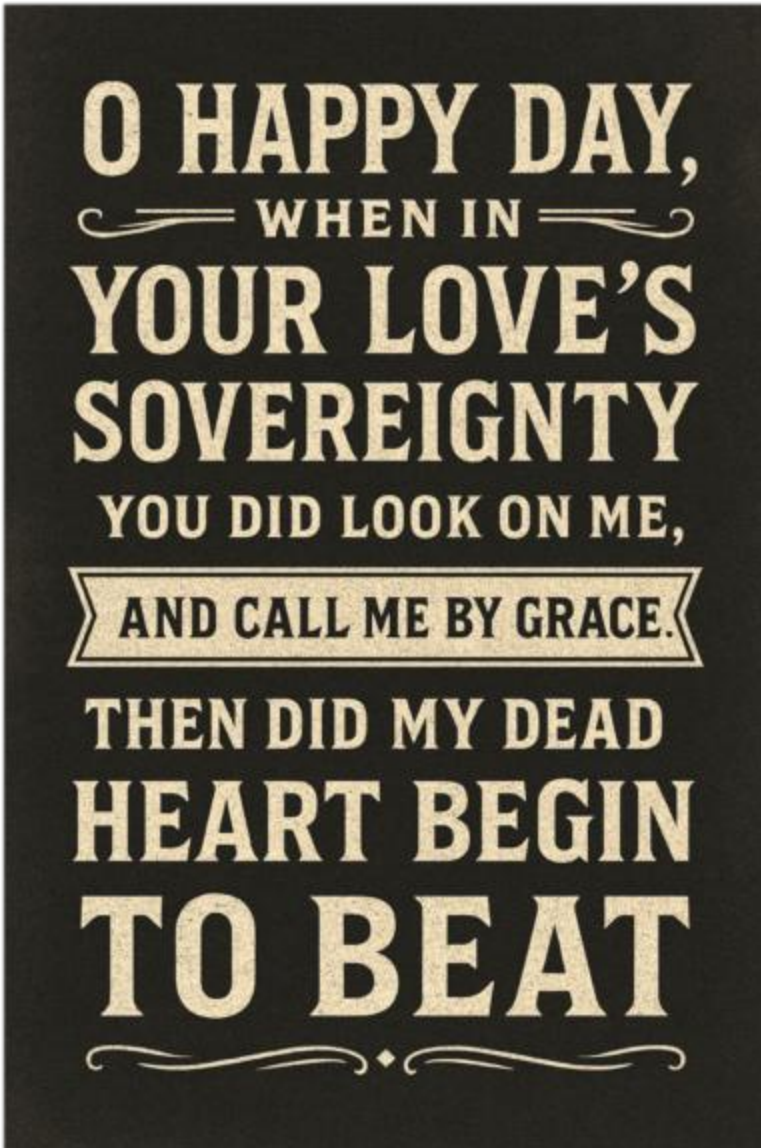
He also warns against false teaching, showing how important it is to guard both truth and character.

As I study Titus, I want to ask: *How is God calling me to grow in maturity and faithfulness? Am I living in a way that reflects the grace I’ve received?*

This letter challenges me to pursue a life of good works—not to earn salvation, but as a natural result of knowing Jesus.

For more detailed background information on this, or any, Bible book, consult a study Bible. You can also view the short Bible Project video introducing Titus by scanning the QR code.





From Valley of Vision, Puritan Prayers, pg. 112

**Week 1****Date:** \_\_\_\_\_**“Father, grip my heart today.”**

\* We recommend reading the intro to Titus on page 32

**Titus**

Read/Listen to the entire letter in one sitting (approx. 7 mins). Envision being there when Titus first read this letter from his close, trusted mentor.



*How would I describe the tone of the letter?*

*What’s the general impact on me?*

*What is one verse or truth that gripped my heart?*

*What’s one thing I know I need to apply even from this first reading?*

Week 1

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”****Titus 1:1-9**

*Am I living a life that is above reproach and blameless? That phrase “above reproach” or “blameless” (:6, 7) isn’t referring to a sinless and perfect life, but to a personal life that is beyond legitimate accusation and public scandal. Am I the same man in private that I am in public? Where would I consider myself a public success but a private failure? Which of these character traits listed in verses 7 & 8 grab my attention? In which of these has God given me strength? In which ones do I sense God wants to grow me? What am I doing to grow in my knowledge of Scripture so that I can stand firm and not be easily swayed by false teaching or the lies of our culture?*



*What 1 or 2 words would I use to describe my current fellowship with the Lord? (sweet, close, distant, absent, joyful, growing, life sustaining, just beginning, etc.)*

What will I pass on to my family? To my GRIP partner? To my friend?

Week 1

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”****Titus 1:10 – 2:10**

*As humans we are constantly being shaped and formed by what we read/watch/listen to, etc. What are the messages or influences that are shaping me? My family? Can I identify any messages or influences that I need to challenge or remove from my life or my home (1:10-11)? In what ways does my life currently confirm, or contradict, my claim to be a disciple of Jesus (1:16)? Where have I seen God grow me in the areas of self-control, patience, and sound faith (2:2)? Where do I still need growth? Who are the people God is leading me to intentionally invest in and be a model of the life of faith (2:7-8)? (think Key Relationships)*



What will I pass on to my family? To my GRIP partner? To my friend?

Week 1

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## “Father, grip my heart today.”

### Psalm 1

*The Book of Psalms is one of the most personal, emotionally rich, and spiritually honest parts of the Bible. A place where human experience meets the Divine. The prayers, songs, and poems are raw and authentic conversations with our Heavenly Father. As you read a few selected Psalms this Grip season, see them as more than ancient poetry—they are living prayers that help us experience God not just intellectually, but emotionally and spiritually.*



*What does this psalm reveal about God's character? What insight into following God does this Psalm give to me?*

*How do I relate to the emotions expressed in this psalm?*

*How might this psalm shift my perspective on my current life situation or challenges?*

*What truths in this psalm can I use in my worship or prayer life today?*

Week 1

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”****Titus 2:11-15**

*How has God’s grace personally shaped my life, not just in salvation, but in everyday growth and transformation (:11-13)? In what areas of my life am I trying to earn God’s approval rather than living in the grace that He’s already given? Where am I currently feeling the tension between the culture (worldly passions) and godly living (:12)? What rhythms or habits am I currently embracing as a way to train myself towards godly living? What specific “good works” is God calling me to pursue right now in my family, church, community, or workplace (:14)?*



What will I pass on to my family? To my GRIP partner? To my friend?

**Congratulations, you've made it  
through the 1st week!**

**Check out this video to underline the  
importance of consistently being in the Word.**



Bible Matters – 4 times a week impact

***YOU CAN'T  
IMPART  
WHAT YOU DON'T  
POSSESS***

## “Father, grip my heart today.”

*11 For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. 12 It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, Titus 2:11-12 (NIV)*



When I first became a Christian, I regarded the Bible largely as a rule book. My perception was that the Bible would tell me what to do (or not do), and I would simply obey. It was as easy as that, so I thought in my new Christian innocence.

To me, then, the practical precepts of the Bible were no more than a statement of the law of God. They commanded but gave no ability to obey. Furthermore, they condemned me for my failure to obey them as I knew I ought. It seemed the more I tried, the more I failed.

**I knew nothing of God’s grace in enabling me to live the Christian life.** I thought it was all by sheer grit and willpower. And just as importantly, I understood little of His forgiving grace through the blood of Christ. So, **I felt both guilty and helpless** – guilty because of recurring sin patterns in my life and helpless to do anything about them.

My experience, however, was not unusual. In fact, I would say it is fairly typical, not just among new believers, but among many who have been Christians for years. That is why we need to understand that it is grace – not law – that disciplines us. Of course, Paul personified grace in the Titus passage (Titus 2:11-12). It is actually God in His grace, or by His grace, Who disciplines us. Or to put it more plainly, **God’s parental training of His children** is based on the principles of grace and administered in the realm of grace.

What are the principles of grace? Basically, there are two truths. The first is the forgiveness of all our sins and the unconditional acceptance of our persons through the atoning work of Jesus Christ. The second is the deliverance from the dominion of sin and the enabling power of the Holy Spirit in us through our union with Christ.

What does it mean that God administers His discipline in the realm of grace? It means that all His teaching, training, and discipline are administered in love and for our spiritual welfare. It means that God is never angry with us, though He is often grieved at our sins. It means He does not condemn us or count our sins against us. All that He does in us and to us is done on the basis of unmerited favor...

So where the law condemns, grace forgives through the Lord Jesus Christ. Where the law commands but gives no power, grace commands but does give power through the Holy Spirit who lives and works within us.

Excerpted from *The Discipline of Grace*, by Jerry Bridges, 1994. Chapter 5 (emphasis added)

*Am I more likely to feel I am beyond the reach of God’s grace or beyond the need for God’s grace? When I am aware that I am not living the kind of life that pleases God, what is my usual response? (i.e., Do I stay away from God or draw near to God?) What does this tell me about my belief in God’s teaching about grace?*

*This week, how have I experienced the enabling power of God’s grace ...*

- *to say “no” to fleshly temptation?*
  
- *to do the good works that God has impressed on my heart to do*

*Run, John, run. The law commands  
But gives neither feet nor hands.  
Better news the gospel brings;  
It bids me fly and gives me wings.*

Attributed to John Bunyan

Week 2

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”****Titus 3:1-7**

*This section of Titus is a beautiful summary of the good news of what God has done on our behalf. What aspect of the gospel described in these verses grips my heart today? As I reflect on my life before Christ, what attitudes or habits has He saved me from (:3)? How does remembering that I was saved by God’s mercy—not by my good behavior—affect the way I view myself and others? What evidence of the Holy Spirit’s renewal do I see in my life right now (:5)? What would it look like for me to rely more fully on the renewing work of the Spirit in my life rather than relying on my own strength to change/grow? Take some time to write out a prayer of gratitude to God for His goodness and lovingkindness.*



What will I pass on to my family? To my GRIP partner? To my friend?

## “Father, grip my heart today.”

### Titus 3:8-15

*What do “good works” look like in my current season of life—in my family, church, community, workplace (:8, 14)? Where do I sense God prompting me to engage more deeply? (think Key Relationships) What distracts me from being fully devoted to “good works?” How can I guard my conversations from becoming a source of division (:9)? Who are the brothers in Christ that I am walking closely with right now (:12-13)? How can we continue to cultivate deeper spiritual friendships that lead toward fruitfulness (:14)? Why not check in with my GRIP partner today!*



What will I pass on to my family? To my GRIP partner? To my friend?

Week 2

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”****Psalm 19**

*The Book of Psalms is one of the most personal, emotionally rich, and spiritually honest parts of the Bible. A place where human experience meets the Divine. The prayers, songs, and poems are raw and authentic conversations with our Heavenly Father. “Lord, As I read this Psalm today, may I engage it as a living prayer that helps me worship You.”*



*What does this psalm reveal about God's character? What insight into following God does this Psalm give to me?*

*How do I relate to the emotions expressed in this psalm?*

*How might this psalm shift my perspective on my current life situation or challenges?*

*What truths in this psalm can I use in my worship or prayer life today?*

## Drawing Near

Hebrews 4:16

Today is set aside to pause and enjoy the nearness of God. To prayerfully recognize, reflect on, and respond to what God has been drawing my attention to.



### Recognize

First, take some moments to look back over the past 9 days of journaling. What words keep bubbling up? What thoughts or ideas does God keep bringing to my attention? What does He seem to be saying to me through the pages of Titus? What has been on my heart in a big way recently? What life situation or circumstance is God drawing my attention to?

### Reflect

Next, reflect on these words WITH God in prayer. Ask God: *Why do these words/ideas/thoughts keep bubbling up? Why Here? Why Now? What specifically do You want me to hear?*

### Respond

Continue in unhurried, prayerful reflection. Ask God: *How do you want me to respond?* If you find it meaningful, write your prayer response back to your loving, heavenly Father. This response time might look like....

- Praise and thanksgiving for His blessings
- Confession and repentance for some sin(s)
- Surrender and yielding to what He is pressing on me.
- Crying out to Him in my struggle

## GRIP Gathering Preparation



**Word Highlights** – Over the last 2 weeks of journaling what truth has impacted my heart in a meaningful way?

Why is this truth meaningful to me here and now?

How is God inviting me to respond to this truth?

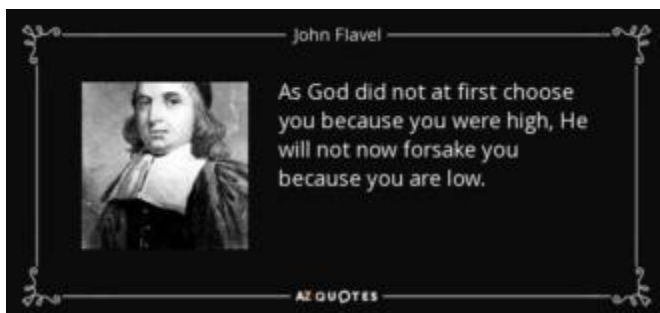


**Pass On** – Have I expressed what God has impressed on my heart to my family, friend, or GRIP partner?

# Section 2

## The Hand





Week 3

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## “Father, grip my heart today.”

**Key Relationship: God**

**Malachi 1:6-14**

*As the object of a GREAT rescue, am I giving God my best? In what ways do my words, attitude, or actions dishonor God?*



### Further reflection on this key relationship.

*Which question does my heart long to answer?*

*Circle 1 or 2 questions I want to reflect on during my personal retreat.*

- Have I experienced the Gospel, or have I just been exposed to the Gospel? (Col 2:3,8,9; Eph 3:8) Have I dug deep into the treasure chest of the Gospel? Do I live life affected and motivated by His grace?
- Is my attitude toward spiritual discipline one of duty or delight (Ps 63:1-8; 1Tim 4:7b-8)? How do I spiritually prepare for each day (Mk 1:35; Ex 33:2)? When I finish my times alone with God, does God have a good grip on my heart (2Tim 1:12)?
- Do I respond to God's Word with a love-motivated obedience (Jn 14:15,21-24)? Am I committed to God's will, God's way (Dan 3:14-18)? What are some goals I have in my walk with God over the next six months?
- Do I trust God to come through for me? Am I experiencing His delivering grace? His sustaining grace (2Cor 12:7-10)? His empowering grace (Phil 4:13; Phil 2:13; Col 1:29)?

## “Father, grip my heart today.”

### Key Relationship: Family / Family-Like

**1Peter 2:21-25; 3:7-12**

*According to Jesus’ model and Peter’s exhortation, what qualities would increasingly characterize all Christ-like relationships?*



#### **Further reflection on this key relationship.**

*Which question does my heart long to answer?*

*Circle 1 or 2 questions I want to reflect on during my personal retreat.*

- What’s it like for this person to live on the other side of me? Does the current health of this relationship accurately reflect what I say that I truly value?
- How am I doing at leading my wife spiritually (Eph 5:23-30)? Do I pray with and for her consistently (Jam 5:16)? Am I passing on what God is showing me during my time alone with Him (Col 3:16)?
- Am I loving my wife like Christ loved the Church? Do I tell her verbally and show her through actions (Eph 5:25)? Am I quick to honor my wife in public (1Pet 3:7)?
- How would I rate the physical, emotional, recreational intimacy in my marriage?
- Am I creating the environment where safe, clear and meaningful communication can happen (Col 3:12-14,19)?

Week 3

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## “Father, grip my heart today.”

**Key Relationship: Family / Family-Like**

**Proverbs 20:7; Deuteronomy 6:5-9**

*When it comes to parenting, the days are long but the years are short. Is my “walk” and “talk” leading my children (or others close to me) toward God or away from Him?*



### Further reflection on this key relationship

*Which question does my heart long to answer?*

*Circle 1 or 2 questions I want to reflect on during my personal retreat.*

- Do I have a mutual heart connection with this person? Am I a good listener? How often do I verbally express my love for, delight with, and pride in?
- How can I be praying for this relationship? (Mark 1:11; Ps 127; 2Cor 7:4,16)
- If character is more caught than taught, what am I modeling (Eph 4:1-3; 1Tim 3:1-7)? How am I limiting the world's influence on my children? (James 1:27b) Do I really understand where my children are socially, emotionally and spiritually (Est 2:11)? Is there anything I have learned from my past or present life which I need to teach them (Ps 78:1-8)?
- Where have I delegated to my wife, youth pastor, teacher or coach something about my children's growth for which I am primarily responsible? (Eph 6:4; Deut 6:1-9; Job 1:1-5; Mal 4:6; Prov 22:16)

Week 3

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”**

**Key Relationship: Believing Man**

**Romans 15:23-24,32**

*In what ways will my GRIP partner find rest, refreshment, and help in my presence this season?*



**Further reflection on this key relationship**

*Which question does my heart long to answer?*

*Circle 1 or 2 questions I want to reflect on during my personal retreat.*

- What positive outcomes have I experienced from past man-to-man relationships? What things would I like to repeat? What would I change?
- How might God change me as I invest in another man (Pr 27:17)? What would success look like after this season of investment?
- In what areas do I need further equipping to be a successful disciple/mentor? Do I qualify as a FATR man (Faithful, Available, Teachable, Reproducible)? Where's the evidence? (Phil 2:19-30; Col 4:12; 2Tim 1:16-18)

Week 3

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”**

**Key Relationship: Unbelieving Friend**

**1Corinthians 10:27 – 11:1**

*Paul modeled and taught the principle of  
“moving toward” those not yet believing.  
What does this currently look like in my life?  
Am I glorifying God in my outreach?*



**Further reflection on this key relationship**

*Which question does my heart long to answer?*

*Circle 1 or 2 questions I want to reflect on during my personal retreat.*

- Does my walk with God cause others to thirst after Him? Do I start each day aware that I am God’s ambassador representing Him and asking, “Who can I bless today”?
- Who has God sovereignly placed in my life who needs to hear, and have an opportunity to respond to, the Good News? If I can’t name one, am I committed to asking God in prayer to open my eyes to the people around me? What steps can I take to engage an unbelieving person? (Col 4:2-6)
- Am I quick to give God credit for the things he has done in my life (Ps 66:16; )? What God stories have been written in my life recently? Am I articulate in sharing my testimony? With whom have I shared it recently?
- As I consider the process of leading another person to Christ, where do I need help? (Prayer, Care, Share)?

## Week 3 GRIP Growth summary

After this past week of exploring scripture related to **relationships**, in what ways can I better align myself with God's high value on the key relationships in my life?



Week 4

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## “Father, grip my heart today.”

### Key Resources: My Heart

The core of discipleship is God’s grip on your heart. When you consider your heart, think of your motives, your purity, your personal holiness. Your heart is also where your dreams, ambitions, passions are rooted. On the negative side, your heart is where past hurts, sin habits, shame, and guilt reside along with other stresses and distractions of this world.



Your relationship with God is sourced in your heart. God has called us to “guard our heart” to “examine our heart” and to invite the Holy Spirit to “search” it (Prov 4:23; 1Cor 11:28; Ps 139:23-24; Matt 6:21). We must constantly and honestly discern the state of our heart. **Don’t leave His presence until He grips your heart.** If our heart is holding onto sin, hurts, wrong thinking, disappointment, guilt, etc. we will never be ALL IN regarding the Key Relationships to which God has called us. What kind of steward are you of your heart?

### Proverbs 3:1; 17:3; 21:2; 4:23; 28:13

*How is God’s grip on my heart? Spend some moments in reflective prayer right now.*

#### **Further Reflection on this key resource**

*Which question does my heart long to answer?*

*Circle 1 or 2 questions I want to reflect on during my personal retreat.*

- Am I going through the motions when it comes to my spiritual life (Rev 3:1)? Am I offering my whole self fully to God (Ps 63:1-8)?
- All of us have blind spots. Am I willing to let the Spirit of God and others close to me help me see what I am not currently seeing? (Ps 139:23-24; Prov 27:6)
- Do I experience the desire to be holy and pure? Am I tending my heart like a garden? What weeds are there that don’t belong?
- Am I aware of a root of bitterness from past hurts growing in my heart (Heb 12:15)?

## “Father, grip my heart today.”

### Key Resources: My Time

God has called us to manage our time within the 168 hours He has given us each week. How we spend or invest that time directly impacts the health of our relationships. It has been said that if satan can't make you bad, he will make you busy. Being over committed is not only a time management issue, but also an indicator that we are doing some things that God has not called nor commanded us to do. The resulting pressure often causes us to treat others like projects, instead of people made in God's image. What kind of steward are you of your time?



### 2Timothy 4:7-8

*Based on how I steward my time NOW, is the trajectory of my life heading toward finishing well?*

#### Further reflection on this key resource.

*Which question does my heart long to answer?*

*Circle 1 or 2 questions I want to reflect on during my personal retreat.*

- How would I spend my time if the Lord were in charge of it? What priority is noticeably absent from my calendar? (Ps 90:12; 1Pet 4:7-8)
- Is God pleased with how I spend the Sabbath? Do words like “refreshment”, “soul rest”, “unhurried” characterize my family on Sundays? (Ex 20:8-11; 31:12-18)
- When interruptions occur, do I view them as blocked goals or providential tests (Gen 22:11-12; Mark 10:13-16; 46-52)? Can I smile at them, or am I irritated and resentful?
- When filling our life, we must put the important “big rocks” in the bucket before adding the less important “little rocks, gravel, and sand.” What “big rocks” are being neglected because my life is filled with the lesser priorities of gravel and sand? Where do I need to say “no” in order to say “yes” to the best?

Week 4

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## “Father, grip my heart today.”

### Key Resources: My Health

Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1Cor 6:19). What an incredible privilege! God has placed a high priority on the stewardship of our health. Bringing your best to your relationships is often a function of feeling energetic or fresh. A little preventative maintenance on an ongoing basis will allow you to give your best energy, instead of leftovers, to the Lord and others. What kind of steward are you of your health (physical, emotional, mental, social)?



### Proverbs 3:5-8; 1Corinthians 11:27-30

*Have I experienced this connection between my unconditional submission to God and my overall health (physical, emotional, mental, social)?*

#### Further Reflection on this key resource

*Which question does my heart long to answer?*

*Circle 1 or 2 questions I want to reflect on during my personal retreat.*

- Do I frequently describe myself with words like “exhausted” “overwhelmed” or “depleted”? Am I a delight to be around? What activities sooth my soul?
- What “noise” keeps me from hearing the Lord and others? Do I set aside time to think clearly? Do I set my mind on the things of the Lord or am I distracted by the world? (Ps 73:16,17; Phil 4:10; Col 3:1-4)
- Am I exercising at least 3X per week for 30 minutes? Has working out and building my body become an idol?
- What would need to change for me to sleep 8 hours each night? Do I feel guilty when I relax?

## “Father, grip my heart today.”

### Key Resources: My Wealth

Rightly managing God’s money is a high priority in His economy. Bad stewardship opens us up to much grief, many distractions and unnecessary burdens. Our goal should not be the American dream, but God’s desires. How much focus we put on our material stuff says a lot about us. Do we hold onto the things of this world lightly (1Cor 7:30b, 31)? Does generosity go against the grain of our heart? What kind of steward are you of your wealth?



### Matthew 19:16-26

*Have I allowed material things to hold a higher place in my life than Christ? Jesus warns that worldly riches are a spiritual liability (19:23ff). What evidence is there that this is the case in my life?*

#### Further Reflection on this key resource

*Which question does my heart long to answer?*

*Circle 1 or 2 questions I want to reflect on during my personal retreat.*

- Do I joyfully live within my means? In what ways do I find my security in money? Am I content with God’s provision? (Phil 4:10-19; 1Tim 6:6-19)
- What evidence is there that my stuff owns me? How much energy do I expend taking care of or organizing my stuff? Do I hold onto the things of this world lightly or tightly (1Cor 7:29-31,35)?
- Do I live generously toward God and others (Prov 3:9; 21:26; Lk 12:21)? Am I tithing faithfully to God? How can I improve my discipline of giving?
- Do I have - and live by - a budget? What is my plan for getting out from under the weight of debt? Are my spouse and I on the same page when it comes to the family budget, saving, and giving?

Week 4

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## “Father, grip my heart today.”

### Key Resources: My Vocation

For most men of working age, time spent at work is their largest time commitment each week. Work is an ordained blessing from God in a variety of ways: financial provision, relationships, satisfaction of using abilities, being a part of a culture, etc. When this area of your life is out of alignment with God’s desire for your work, the ultimate victims are His key relationships. Stresses related to a disconnect between your job description and your abilities, overtime work hours, imbalanced priorities, negative work culture, hard driving bosses, etc. will wear you out. Living a life of “just enough to get by” or “coasting” or “giving leftovers” does not help you to succeed in your key relationships. And remember, beyond your paid job, your vocation also includes areas where you serve and utilize your abilities like volunteer work and ministry. What kind of steward are you of your vocation?



### 1Peter 4:10-11; Romans 12:4-8

*Who am I currently serving with the abilities God has given me?  
Have I found an area of service in my local church or community  
that “fits” me?*

#### Further Reflection on this key resource

*Which question does my heart long to answer?*

*Circle 1 or 2 questions I want to reflect on during my personal retreat.*

- Is God my audience of One? (Ps 100:2; Mk 10:45) Am I using my spiritual gifts and calling during this season? Am I doing a few things well, or am I overcommitted and operating in the flesh? How is my servant attitude?
- Do I see my job as a way to glorify God with my excellence (Col 3:17,23-24)? Do the people at my work gravitate toward me or away from me (2Cor 2:14-16)?
- Am I involved in my community so I can spread the aroma of Christ (2Cor 2:14-16)? Wherever I volunteer, am I dependable and reliable?
- What’s my plan for transitioning from my main career? Have I sought God’s input? Have I written down my definition of what it looks like for me to finish this life well?

## Week 4 GRIP Growth summary

After this past week of exploring scripture related to **resources**, in what ways can I better align myself with God's high value on the key resources in my life?



Week 5

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”**

### **Ephesians 1:1-14**

*What has God the Father done for me? What benefits have I received from Jesus (“in Him”) and from the Holy Spirit? What truth from this passage most blows me away right now? Why? Who, apart from myself, is currently benefitting from my salvation? How?*



**Note:** A brief introduction to Ephesians is found on page 90.

What will I pass on **to my family?** **To my GRIP partner?** **To my friend?**

Week 5

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”**

## **Ephesians 1:15-23**

*What does Paul pray for these believers in Asia Minor? Do I honestly desire these things? In what way has the dimmer switch been turned up in my life so I can see more clearly and appreciate more dearly the realities of God in my life? Have I personally submitted to Christ's authority and leadership in my life? What might need to change for Him to truly be “head over all” areas of my life (:21-22)?*



What will I pass on to my family? To my GRIP partner? To my friend?

Week 5

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”**

## Ephesians 2:1-10

*Who am I outside of Christ? Am I daily aware that I have moved from being an object of wrath to an object of grace? What parts of my past or present do I see God rescuing me from (:4-5)? Am I just simply getting through my day or am I walking in the good works God has prepared for me (:10)? What are the “good works” God has prepared for me in this season—whether at home, at work, in my church, or my community?*



*For further encouragement, scan the code to listen to this song on YouTube.*

Dwell songs – Abide (Lyrics) ft. Aaron Williams



**Week 5**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **“Father, grip my heart today.”**

Today you get to choose how to spend your time alone with God. Here are some ideas:

- Go for a prayer walk
- Practice unhurried solitude in God’s presence
- Go back and finish a past journaling day
- Meditate on one verse
- Prepare for your retreat (if it is still upcoming)



Whatever you choose, allow God to grip your heart for the day ☺

What will I pass on to my family? To my GRIP partner? To my friend?

Week 5

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Retreat Summary: Key 3 Action Points

**Suggestion:** Do this journal day **AFTER** you have had your personal retreat.

*“...to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.”*

James 4:17

*“Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?”*

Luke 6:46

*“If you know these things you are blessed if you do them.”*

John 13:17

You’ve recently had your personal retreat. A natural outcome of that extended time of being still and listening to God will be a few action points – steps of obedience - for this next season in your life. This journaling day is designed to get you moving forward on the action points God laid on your heart. As the verses above remind us, the Christian life involves “doing.” The grace that saves us is not opposed to our love-motivated efforts to obey.



What 3 action points will I prioritize over the next few months to help me move forward in my life? What’s at stake (i.e. in my relationship to God, my family, my heart, etc.) if I don’t follow-through on these?

**Reminder: At least one of my Key3 Action Points should focus on a particular family or family-like relationship.**

**1) Action Point:**

**Why is this important?**

## **2) Action Point:**

**Why is this important?**

## **3) Action Point:**

**Why is this important?**

Spend some moments talking to God about these. Ask Him for success, for vigilance and for perseverance during those times when the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

## GRIP Gathering Preparation

The last 3 weeks have been devoted to thinking about my life in God's presence and hearing from Him.



Here is what I learned from the experience of having a retreat...



Here is what I sense God wants to emphasize in my life this season: (see previous page where I have listed my action points)

# Meek. Humble. Gentle.

Jesus is not trigger-happy.  
Not harsh, reactionary,  
easily exasperated.

*He is the most understanding  
person in the universe.*

The posture most natural  
to Him  
is not a pointed finger  
*but open arms.*

Dane Ortlund, *Gentle and Lowly*, Ch.1



come with Me  
by yourselves  
to a quiet place  
**and get some rest.**

~Jesus Christ, Mark 6:31

In stressful times such as these, taking a break often seems counter intuitive. It is important to remember that renewal and restoration quietly before the Lord are not luxuries and should not be last on your list. They are essential. In the busyness of life, rest is vital for staying sharp and effective. Renewal leads to greater creativity and productivity!

~Max Lucado, *The Applause of Heaven*

**THE DEVIL KNOWS  
YOUR NAME BUT  
CALLS YOU BY  
YOUR SIN.  
GOD KNOWS YOUR  
SIN BUT CALLS YOU  
BY YOUR NAME.**

- Ricardo Sanchez

## Personal Retreat

**Do not view this extended time as a time of “study,” rather a time to listen and hear from your Heavenly Father.**

*“Anyone who belongs to God listens gladly to the words of God.”*

**John 8:47a**

Your life assignment over these next 3 weeks is to have an extended time alone with God. We call it a personal retreat. The purpose is to slow down and listen to God. Look at it as an extended time with your best friend! The simple goal of this retreat is to ponder your life before God with a listening heart and a posture to obey. Find a quiet place in which you can be uninterrupted for at least 4 hours.



**We suggest scheduling this retreat sometime between Friday Sep. 19th and Sunday Sep. 28th.** This timing will allow you to complete the first two weeks of Section 2 which focuses on your Key Relationships and your Key Resources.

## Before Your Retreat

- **Carve out 4-6 hours on your calendar** – Perhaps a Saturday morning, a Sunday afternoon, or taking a half day off during the work week. Some men rise early on Sunday AM and spend 2 hours with the Lord. Then they go to Sunday worship with their family, but return home (while their family remains for Sunday school) for another 2 hours of focused time before lunch with the family.
- **Choose a quiet place** – Find a comfortable place where you will be undistracted and uninterrupted. Perhaps a place out of your normal routine. A park, library, lake, woods, an empty room at church, etc. There’s a reason that the word “SILENT” and the word “LISTEN” have the same letters 😊.
- **What to Bring** - Bible, GRIP Guide, device (optional), pen, personal journal if you use one.
- **DO** journal through the 2 weeks of “The Hand” section (pg 49- 59) before taking your retreat. **DO** consider fasting a meal so you are reminded of your real hunger for God. **DO** get a good night’s sleep the night before. **DO** let your family and GRIP partner know when you are planning to have this retreat so they can be prayerful. **DO** take off your watch.
- **DON’T** look at texts, emails, social media during your retreat. **DON’T** pack it too full of activity so you aren’t quiet before God.

## Flow for Actual Retreat

This GRIP season we'd like each man to follow this general outline during his retreat:

- **Present yourself to God (30 mins)**
- **Read through Titus in one sitting (20 mins)**
- **Reflect on the truths of Titus as they intersect with your life and especially your Key Relationships (90-120 mins)**
- **Write down 3 action points to pursue this fall (30 mins)**

### **Present myself to God (30 mins)**

This is a time to remember God's weightiness in your life. It's a time to be really honest with Him. It's a time to express your heart. It's a time to give Him full permission to grip your heart. It might include Bible reading, praying, singing worship songs, confessing, etc.

Listen to Your Heavenly Father say, *"This is my son in whom I am well pleased"* (Mt 3:17). Remember that God demonstrated His own love toward you, in that while you were a sinner (helpless, ungodly, His enemy)...Christ died for you (Rom 5:8)! Savor the reality that nothing can separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus your Lord (Rom 8:39). See and believe His promise that He will be with you always (Mt 28:20). Review the Gospel. In short, allow God to grip your heart with the truths He has already communicated to you in His Word.



*"Father, increase the sensitivity of my heart to hear Your Word and to obey Your will. May my life reflect what is important to Your heart and may I pursue the things that You value. Help me meditate on Your Word and pour out the desires of my heart in prayer. Grant me insight into what steps of obedience You have for my life this GRIP season. And motivate me by the depth of*

*Your love and grace. Use this time to cleanse my heart, clarify my thoughts, and heighten my sense of fellowship with You."*

### **Read through Titus in one sitting (20-30 mins)**

Read and/or listen to Titus in one sitting. Do your best to clear your mind of "noise" and listen to the Scripture with the ears of your heart. Let the Word read you. **What does God stir in your heart as you listen?** Underline, highlight, or make notes when God begins to grip your heart. You can come back to these markings after you've read the entire letter and meditate more on what was stirred up.

Your recent journaling days related to the 10 fingers of your HANDs prompted you to consider your Key Relationships and your Key Resources (pages 49-59). **As you enter this retreat time, most likely there are one or two fingers (Key Relationships or Key Resources) that have your special attention. Keep those in your mind as you read through Titus.**

### **Reflect on the truths of Titus as they intersect with my life (90-120 mins)**

Go back to your underlines, highlights or notes from your reading through Titus. Take time to reflect in an unhurried manner. View this time as a conversation with your heavenly Father who wants to speak directly into your life. Be creative in this time. You don't need to sit cross legged and hum while you meditate and reflect. Take a walk, change your posture (stand, kneel, prostrate yourself). You may find it meaningful to creatively express what you are feeling through art (writing poetry, composing music, creating something graphically, etc.). Engage and interact with God in the most intimate way that you can.

Re-read the verses that stirred your heart. Ask questions and take notes as you continue this conversation with God.

- *What do You want me to learn from this today?*
- *Why this word? Why here? Why now?*
- *God, how are You inviting me to respond to You?*
- *What steps of obedience (Action Points) are You calling me to take?*

### **Write down 3 action points to pursue this fall (30 mins)**

You will have had many ideas during the retreat. Take a first pass at identifying a few action points which you sense **God is impressing on your heart**. These are actions that will help you move forward. It would be natural that your action points flowed from God's revelation in Titus as it applies to your Key Relationships and Key Resources. In this season of GRIP, we want you to be intentional about your family relationships. So, **at least 1 of your Key 3 Action Points should emphasize a family or family-like relationship.**

If action points are new to you, they are further described below.



## Action Points

As we've said, a natural outcome of this extended time of retreating and listening to God will be a few action points for this next season in your life. Let's explore a little further, then, the WHAT, WHY, and HOW of action points.

### WHAT is an Action Point?

An Action Point is a specific way to obey God in this season of discipleship. It's some step of obedience. It helps "put feet on" one or more Biblical commands or principles or truths. Action points are activities that put you in a position to let God do His thing in your life. They allow God a better grip on your life. Action Points will almost always be directly related to God's grip on one of your key relationships OR on one of the areas over which He has given you stewardship. So, your action point becomes the answer to this question:

*In this season, as I abide in Christ, what action can I pursue to better align myself with God's desire for this **Key Relationship** or this **Key Resource**?*

If God is truly the heavy weight (glorious One) in your life, then an action point sourced in Him will be for your greatest good. Action Points are more than "nice ideas" or wishful thinking. If God is putting an action point on your heart, then He will also provide the internal spiritual motivation to do it (Phil 2:13; Col 1:29; 1Cor 15:10).

Action Points usually take one of a few forms:

- **establish a new pattern** (i.e. spiritual discipline, helpful practice, habit, etc.)
- **stop an existing pattern** (i.e. sin habit, a hindrance (Heb 12:1)
- **a one-time action** (forgive, apologize, write letter, have a conversation, read a book, attend a seminar, weekend away with wife, create a will, write a legacy letter, take a road trip to reconnect with an estranged friend or relative, follow-through on some intention, etc.)

The next page lists some "baseline" action points for each of the five Key Relationships and Key Resources. If you are new to the idea of action points, this list is a good starting place to consider the rhythms of your spiritual life. Again, our hope is that you will listen to God as you pray about what action points you sense He desires for you. Some men will **ADOPT** these action points as is. Others will **ADAPT** them to make them their own. Others may already have these rhythms in their life and will pursue some unique action points they sense God is pressing on their heart.

## Sample Action Points

The following action points may be a good place to start.

### Key Relationships

**God** → Daily invest enough time alone with God, through Bible reading and prayer, until He has a good grip on my heart for the day.

**Wife** → Daily pray for and/or with my wife.

**Children** → Regularly pass on to my family what God is impressing on my heart from His Word.

**Disciple** → Weekly connect (face to face or via phone) with my discipleship partner for a time of Gospel reminding, mutual accountability, encouragement, and prayer.

**Friend** → Identify my next step in walking my friend through the process of accepting or rejecting Christ. Then take **THAT step!** (i.e. Prayer-Care-Share; share testimony, explain Gospel, pray for, listen to, meet a need, have a shared experience, invite to a wired event, etc.).

### Key Resources

**Heart** → Acknowledging that God longs to commune with me in my heart, I purpose to daily ponder the Gospel and confess my sin so my heart will stay soft and pure.

**Time** → Acknowledging that God gave the Sabbath for rest, renewal, and realignment, each Sabbath I purpose to \_\_\_\_\_ (i.e. unhurriedly think through the priorities of the upcoming week; lead my family in 1 hour of quietness in the house; guard my family from bucket draining activities; etc.)

**Health** → Acknowledging that my physical body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, I purpose to \_\_\_\_\_ (i.e. Get a good night's rest every night; Exercise vigorously 3X per week; drink more water; eat with my long-term health in mind; quit smoking; faithfully rehab an injury; etc.)

**Wealth** → Acknowledging that I am a manager and not the owner of my wealth, I purpose to \_\_\_\_\_ (i.e. establish a budget and joyfully live under it; live generously; give away material things; be deliberate about getting out of debt; etc.)

**Vocation** - In light of my God-given abilities and passions, I purpose to help meet the following need in my local church or in my community: \_\_\_\_\_

## WHY Action Points?

A *disciple* is one who learns by doing, like an apprentice. Where does our “doing” fit in to our spiritual life? God deeply desires for us to press on to maturity, looking more and more like Jesus (1Tim 4:15; Rom 8:29; Phil 2:12-13; 3:13,14; Heb 6:1; 12:1). We have a part in this transformation towards Christlikeness. We have some work to do. Dallas Willard has written, “*Grace is not opposed to effort, it’s opposed to earning.*” Our “doing”, our effort, is pleasing to God when it is an outflow of our deep desiring of Him. Action Points are an expression of obedience fueled by a new desire in us.

Passivity has been a plague on men since Adam. It’s part of our fleshly DNA. The act of identifying tangible actions and pursuing them with a desire that God gives, is a path to owning our spiritual life. Action points force us to focus and to depend on God for his strength.

Now, let’s be careful. God is NOT out to overwhelm you with a long to-do list. That’s what religion is all about – doing a list of things in the flesh and thinking that God is pleased. God is not impressed with your long list. And your heart isn’t joyful when your “doing” is sourced in your flesh. You’ll either quickly become frustrated by your lack of progress or you will see some early success and become prideful. Pursuing action points in the flesh never works. **Ultimately, true fruit in our spiritual life comes only from one source: abiding in Jesus** (John 15:1-17, Luke 10:38-42).



Because so many of us are recovering Pharisees, we highly recommend that you focus on **no more than 3 action points (“Key 3”)** and experience the sensation of depending on God for success. **Note:** At least 1 of your Key 3 action points should directly relate to a family or family-like relationship.

## HOW to Write an Action Point?

When formulating action points, try to make them SMART\*

### SMART Action Points

- S** pecific – not fuzzy
- M** easurable – you know when you are done
- A** ttainable – possible to do
- R** elevant - meaningful
- T** ime Limited – can show progress between meetings

## RECORDING Action Points

### In The Grip Guide

The last journaling page in Week 5 (page 65-66) is set aside to record your action points in one place that is easily shareable with your GRIP partner. It is SO MUCH EASIER to practice accountability with another brother when you have each other's action points in a concise form. 😊

OR...

### Use the Grip App

Our [grip.focusedliving.com](http://grip.focusedliving.com) WebApp is specifically designed for you to record and share your action points with your GRIP partner. The App allows you to record any number of action points related to your Key Relationships and Key Resources. However, as men, we can only focus on a few action points at a time. So, after recording several action points (perhaps 1 per each of the 10 fingers), tag your “Key 3” action points that you’ll prioritize this season.

The App allows you to view your GRIP partner’s “Key 3” action points. So, when you pray for him or when you meet with him for accountability, open the app 😊

Scan this QR code to view a tutorial video on how to use the Grip App for sharing action points.



## TAKE ACTION!

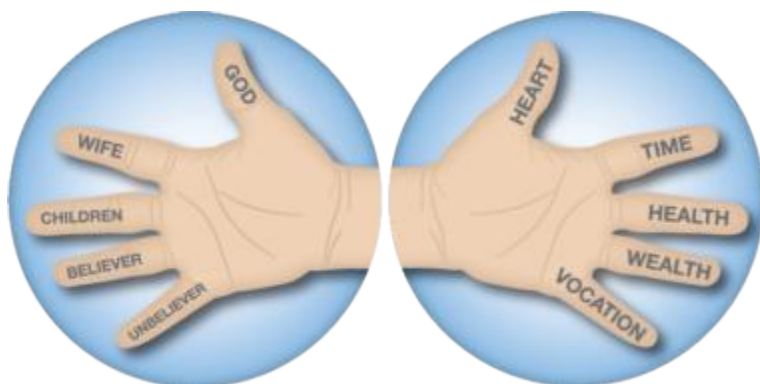
Writing down some action points and sharing them with a brother is important. But the point is to DO them! The law of diminishing intent says **the longer you wait to take action, the less likely you will ever take the action.** Therefore, once God puts an action point on your heart, start moving.

As you begin your retreat, reflect back on the questions you circled during week 3 and week 4 (p. 49-59) of your journaling. If there are scriptures associated with the questions you circled, we strongly encourage you to read those as well.

God, I invite you to speak into these areas of my life.

*“Speak, for your servant is listening.”*

*1 Samuel 3:10*



## **Notes**

Notes

## **Notes**

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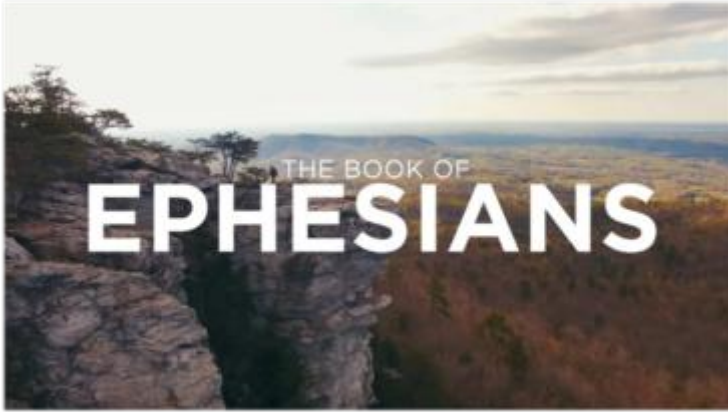
## **Notes**

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## **Notes**

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# Section 3



## **Ephesians 2:8-10 (NASB95)**

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

## Ephesians

You'll spend the next few weeks of this GRIP season reading through the book of Ephesians. Ephesians is a powerful letter written by the Apostle Paul, likely while he was in prison in Rome (~AD 61), to the believers in Ephesus and surrounding churches.

It's not just theology—it's a bold call to live with purpose, identity, and integrity in Christ.

Ephesians is organized around two big thoughts.

- The first half of the book (chapters 1–3) reveals WHO we are in Christ—chosen, redeemed, adopted, and sealed by the Holy Spirit. Paul paints a stunning picture of God's grace and the spiritual blessings available to every believer, reminding us that we didn't earn it, but we are called to live worthy of it.
- The second half (chapters 4–6) gets practical and focuses on HOW our standing with Christ translates into everyday life—at home, at work, and in the world. He calls for maturity, unity, purity, strength, and love. Husbands are called to lead by loving like Christ, and all men are urged to put on the armor of God and stand firm in a spiritual battle that's very real.

Ephesians reminds us that our identity doesn't come from what we do, but from what Christ has done for us. Yet it doesn't stop there—it calls us to step up as men of character, courage, and conviction. Whether you're leading a family, struggling in your faith, or trying to find your purpose, Ephesians challenges you to live fully rooted in God's truth and fully engaged in the life He's called you to live.

For more detailed background information on this, or any, Bible book, consult a study Bible. You can also view the short Bible Project video introducing Ephesians by scanning the QR code.



Week 6

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”****Ephesians 2:11-22**

Review the questions below, then open the Word and read the passage. Journal your insights below. Respond to the truth that most fueled your soul by writing a prayer to the Lord.



*The blood of Christ has brought together Jew and Gentile (:13). How have I tangibly and practically experienced this positional unity we have in Christ? How can I be used of God to help a fellow believer experience this unity? Do I view my participation in my local church from the perspective of “growing into a holy temple in the Lord” (:21)? If everyone in my church had the same spiritual maturity as I have, would the health of my church increase or decrease?*

What will I pass on to my family? To my GRIP partner? To my friend?

Week 6

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”**

### **Ephesians 3:1-13**

*What is the mystery which has now been made known to Paul? According to vs10, who is the audience watching the Church? To the demons who know our sinfulness, what do they think of God's grace to me? To the angels who know God's holiness, what do they think of God's grace to me? Do I approach my Father with confident boldness (:12)? When have I recently been amazed at the bottomless riches I have in Christ (:8)?*



What will I pass on to my family? To my GRIP partner? To my friend?

## “Father, grip my heart today.”

### Ephesians 3:14-21

*Paul’s praying for me again! What is he asking for on my behalf? Where do I see the Trinity in the prayer? In what way do I need to be “strengthened” (:16), “rooted and grounded” (:17) “filled up” (:19) right now? Why not pause now and pray this prayer for my GRIP partner.*



What will I pass on to my family? To my GRIP partner? To my friend?

## “Father, grip my heart today.”

### Psalm 23

*The Book of Psalms is one of the most personal, emotionally rich, and spiritually honest parts of the Bible. A place where human experience meets the Divine. The prayers, songs, and poems are raw and authentic conversations with our Heavenly Father. “Lord, As I read this Psalm today, may I engage it as a living prayer that helps me worship You.”*



*What does this psalm reveal about God's character? What insight into following God does this Psalm give to me?*

*How do I relate to the emotions expressed in this psalm?*

*How might this psalm shift my perspective on my current life situation or challenges?*

*What truths in this psalm can I use in my worship or prayer life today?*

# “Father, grip my heart today.”

## Ephesians 4:1-16

*After spending 3 chapters explaining who we really are in Christ, Paul now describes in the rest of the letter what it looks like to live this out. How would my various relationships be different if the qualities of verse 2 increasingly characterized my life? How has God gifted me? How am I currently building up the Body of Christ? According to Paul, what is my goal for GRIP (:1, 13)? What is the impact on the Body if I choose not to “carry my weight”?*



What will I pass on to my family? To my GRIP partner? To my friend?

Week 7

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”**

### **Ephesians 4:17-32**

*Contrast the traits of the Old and New nature. Where do I see evidence in my life that I am indeed “putting off” the old and “putting on” the new nature? Am I giving the devil a foothold anywhere in my life? Realize that Paul would not have had to write this section if his readers were fully living from the “new self” 😊.*



What will I pass on to my family? To my GRIP partner? To my friend?

# “Father, grip my heart today.”

## Ephesians 5:1-21

*If I am saved by grace (2:3-9), why is Paul so concerned about my conduct? Ponder these phrases: “be imitators of God”(1), “walk in love”(2), “walk as children of Light”(8), “learn what is pleasing to the Lord”(10), “do not be foolish”(17), “be filled with the Spirit”(18), “Be subject (submit) to one another”(21)*



What will I pass on to my family? To my GRIP partner? To my friend?

Week 7

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”**

### **Ephesians 5:22-33**

*The next two days of journaling speak directly to my family or family-like relationships. Today the focus is on relationship with my wife. Remember how Paul started chapter 4: “walk... with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love...”(4:1-2).*

*Which of these qualities is she longing for me to manifest? What’s it like for my wife to live on the other side of me? How am I “washing her with the water of the Word”(5:26)? If married, what action point related to my wife do I need to lean into THIS week?*



What will I pass on to my family? To my GRIP partner? To my friend?

## “Father, grip my heart today.”

### Ephesians 6:1-9

*Paul shifts his focus to the parent/child relationship. What’s my response when my kids disobey me or exasperate me? Am I slow to anger like My Lord is? Am I creating a home environment that promotes flourishing? Am I praying with and for my children? Related to my job, what’s my current attitude? What is required of me today as I work (as one serving others OR as one supervising others)?*



What will I pass on to my family? To my GRIP partner? To my friend?

Week 7

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”**

## **Psalm 25**

*The Book of Psalms is one of the most personal, emotionally rich, and spiritually honest parts of the Bible. A place where human experience meets the Divine. The prayers, songs, and poems are raw and authentic conversations with our Heavenly Father. “Lord, As I read this Psalm today, may I engage it as a living prayer that helps me worship You.”*



*What does this psalm reveal about God's character? What insight into following God does this Psalm give to me?*

*How do I relate to the emotions expressed in this psalm?*

*How might this psalm shift my perspective on my current life situation or challenges?*

*What truths in this psalm can I use in my worship or prayer life today?*

**Week 8**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”**

**Ephesians 6:10-24**

*Do I currently live with a war time mentality? As satan does reconnaissance on me, what tendencies and weaknesses does he see? What should my response be according to this passage? What is the connection between putting on the armor of God and preaching the Gospel to myself?*



What will I pass on to my family? To my GRIP partner? To my friend?

## “Father, grip my heart today.”

*“Jesus’ gospel didn’t just call people to pray a little prayer for their sins to be forgiven so they’d get to heaven when they died... No, Jesus’ gospel called people to **follow him** no matter the cost and without conditions or excuses – to the end. Jesus never taught that you could be a Christian and not be his disciple.” Bill Hull p.30*



*“God doesn’t just want to blow your mind; He wants to rule your heart... True biblical faith **radically rearranges the way that you approach everything** in your life” Paul Tripp*

What’s the difference between a “Christian”, a “disciple”, and a “follower”? Biblically, there is no difference. These are all synonyms describing the man who has heard the call of Jesus and responded by repenting, believing, following, and surrendering to Christ’s kingship in his life. A “Christian”, “disciple”, and “follower” describe the person who has made the radical choice to live as Jesus’ apprentice.

Sadly, the Gospel message many of us heard and responded to did not emphasize this vital piece of following after Jesus and living life His way. For the original disciples, following Jesus was physical and literal. They saw Him with their eyes. They heard Him with their ears. They spoke to Him as they walked. But what does it mean for us **today** to follow Jesus when we can’t see or hear Him?

Years after Jesus ascended into heaven, The apostle Paul exhorts believers to walk\* after Christ. It’s Paul’s way of saying ‘follow Christ.’ Some well-known instances of Paul using the word “walk” in this figurative sense include:

- walk** in newness of life (Rom 6:4)
- do not **walk** according to the flesh (Rom 8:4)
- walk** by the Spirit...(Gal 5:16, 25)

\*Some Bible translations substitute the word “live” for the word “walk.” Eph 5:2 “**walk** in love” (ESV); “**Live a life** filled with love” (NLT)

You are halfway through this GRIP season of discipleship! What a fitting time to pause and evaluate your walking after Jesus! Review these occurrences of the word “walk” in Paul’s letter to the Ephesians and compare your day to day living with what you read. We’ve included some questions to help you assess.

### **DO NOT WALK THIS WAY**

Ephesians 2:2 you formerly **walked** according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air.”

Ephesians 4:17...**walk** no longer just as the Gentiles also **walk**, in the futility of their mind.

*What remnants of my “former” life are still showing in my current life? What wrong (“futile”) thinking do I have about myself? About Jesus?*

### **DO WALK THIS WAY**

2:10 **walk** in [good works].

*How am I practically demonstrating that I have a new life in Christ? Who is benefitting from my good works?*

4:1 ...**walk** in a manner worthy of the (Gospel) calling  
*When God called me to Himself, I became a son of His (John 1:12). Recently, how have I represented “the family” well?*

5:2...**walk** in love, just as Christ also loved you  
*How often do I reflect on Christ’s love for me? Does acting on another’s behalf without regard for myself describe me lately?*

5:8...**walk** as children of light...in all goodness, righteousness & truth  
*Where have I recently taken a stand for truth or purity?*

5:15 Be careful how you **walk**, not as unwise men but as wise,  
*Am I careful or sloppy in aligning my life with God’s revealed wisdom?*

## Scripture Memory

Hiding the truth of God's Word in my heart is an incredibly valuable resource in my day to day life of following Jesus and keeping in step with His Spirit. The Word of God gives me the power to say no to temptation, to hear the Spirit's leading, and to follow His will.



Think over the last several days. **What truths has God been impressing on me?** Maybe page through your GRIP journaling through Ephesians. **How has God been stirring my heart? Where is He getting my attention?**

Could it be that God is saying, *I want you to hide this truth deep in your mind and heart so it becomes part of you?* **What Scripture verse(s) would be meaningful for me to commit to memory so I will have it when I need it the most?**

One impactful way to hide God's word in my heart is to recite it and then pray from it. Maybe there is a word or phrase or truth that the Spirit will use to stimulate me toward specific prayer. Allow the verse to be a jumping off point for communing with God through prayer.

For example, suppose God highlights Eph 5:8-9

**“You are light in the Lord; walk as children of Light (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness, and righteousness and truth.”**

***“Lord, as I walk through this day, may my mind, mouth, and heart be overwhelmed with Your, goodness and righteousness and Light. Please crowd out the darkness and impurity that often sneaks in.***

Week 8

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”****Psalm 104**

*The Book of Psalms is one of the most personal, emotionally rich, and spiritually honest parts of the Bible. A place where human experience meets the Divine. The prayers, songs, and poems are raw and authentic conversations with our Heavenly Father. “Lord, As I read this Psalm today, may I engage it as a living prayer that helps me worship You.”*



*What does this psalm reveal about God's character? What insight into following God does this Psalm give to me?*

*How do I relate to the emotions expressed in this psalm?*

*How might this psalm shift my perspective on my current life situation or challenges?*

*What truths in this psalm can I use in my worship or prayer life today?*

Week 8

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Action Points Refresh

*for it is God who is at work in you, both to desire  
and to work for His good pleasure.*

**Philippians 2:13**

*For this purpose I also labor, striving according  
to His power which works mightily within me.*

**Colossians 1:29**

*For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become  
conformed to the image of His Son...*

**Romans 8:29**



About three weeks ago, I took a retreat to think about my life in God's presence. And I invited Him to speak into my life. Coming out of that time, I wrote down some steps of obedience that I sensed He was impressing on my heart (see page 65-66). Remember, Action Points are more than "nice ideas" or wishful thinking. If God truly has all authority in my life (Mt 28:18), then an action point sourced in Him will be for my greatest good. And if it is from Him, then He will also provide the **internal spiritual motivation** to do it.

*Take a few moments to review my action points. Do each of them still  
take priority in my life or is there a shift needed?*

*Have I gotten the traction I had hoped for?*

*Do I need some practical help to get momentum? What kind of  
accountability works best for me?*

*Am I approaching them with a self-improvement mentality "in the  
flesh" or Do I have a sense of the Spirit's enabling?*

*Share an action point update with my GRIP partner.*

## GRIP Gathering Preparation



**Word Highlights** – Over the last 2 weeks of journaling what truth has impacted my heart in a meaningful way?

Why is this truth meaningful to me here and now?

How is God inviting me to respond to this truth?



**Pass On** – Have I expressed what God has impressed on my heart to my family, friend, or GRIP partner?



**Action Point Progress** – Over these past weeks I followed through on the following actions which God put on my heart to prioritize.



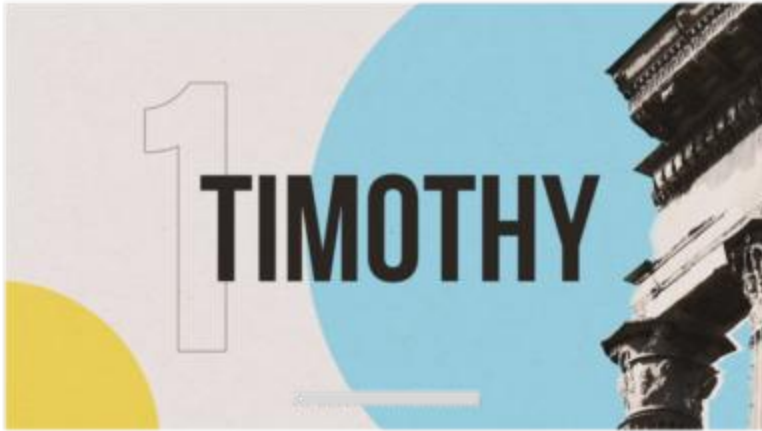
**Walking my friend toward Christ** – What step have I recently taken with my friend who is not yet a follower of Christ? What is my next step (Prayer, Care, Share)?

“Our job as parents is to make  
the tender heart of Christ  
irresistible and unforgettable.

Our goal is that our children will leave  
home at eighteen unable to live  
the rest of their lives believing  
that their sins and sufferings  
could ever repel Christ.”

— *Dane Ortlund* —  
*Gentle and Lowly*, pg. 100

# Section 4



## 1Timothy 4:12 (NASB95)

Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but *rather* in speech, conduct, love, faith *and* purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.

# 1Timothy

Our final Bible book to read during this GRIP discipleship season will be the letter 1Timothy. As you spend these three weeks slowly processing this letter to a faithful young leader, may God elevate you to man up in your current life situation.

**Author:** Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God (1:1). His writing has divine authority and at the same time, reflects his humility as the foremost (or chief) sinner (1:15).

**Date:** It most likely was written sometime between AD 63-66 after Paul had been released from his first Roman imprisonment and before his final fatal Roman imprisonment.

**Purpose/Occasion:** Some leaders inside the church of Ephesus, which Paul planted, were straying from teaching sound doctrine and living godly lives (1:3-4, 19-20; Acts 20:29-30). The false teaching seemed to be characterized by strange fascination with genealogies, forbidding marriage, and not eating certain foods (4:3). Paul is clear that this is blasphemy, and the devil was behind it (1:20; 4:1; 6:3-5). He assigns his disciple and beloved son in the faith, Timothy, to stay in Ephesus for a while to deal with these wayward elders and re-establish order.

**Audience:** This letter was a public letter to Timothy. It gave Timothy the apostolic authority to represent Paul to the Ephesian church and bring correction based on the church standards Paul lays out.

**Characteristics of the book:** 1Timothy, along with Titus, 2Timothy, and Philemon, are often referred to as pastoral epistles. They are each addressed to individuals, not churches, and in them Paul is instructing his protégés how to navigate specific church situations. Since Timothy was well acquainted with Paul's theology, the letter is not heavy on doctrine. Here are some of the themes you will encounter as you read:

- A Call to be a praying church (2:1-8)
- Qualifications of church leaders (3:1-15)
- Effort and discipline in the godly life (4:7-16)
- Right Disposition toward spiritual leaders (5:1,2,17-25)
- A Strong warning against materialism (6:6-10, 17-19)
- Majestic descriptions of Christ (1:17; 3:16; 6:15-16)

For more detailed background information on this, or any, Bible book, consult a study Bible and/or view the short Bible Project video introducing 1Timothy by scanning the QR code.



LET ME NOT  
LAY MY PIPE  
TOO SHORT  
OF THE FOUNTAIN,  
NEVER TOUCHING  
THE ETERNAL  
SPRING  
NEVER DRAWING  
DOWN WATER  
FROM ABOVE

From Valley of Vision, Puritan Prayers, pg. 123

Week 9

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”**

## 1Timothy 1:1-11

*When did God become MY Savior and Jesus Christ MY hope (1:1)? Describe the relationship between Paul and Timothy (1:2, 18; 1Cor 4:17; Phil 2:20, 22)? Have I experienced the spiritual “Father-son” relationship as a father or son? Have I personally caught the vision of discipling ‘one man each year for the rest of my life’? According to verse 5, how is the impact of God’s Word in my life accurately measured (:5)? Are my family members currently receiving my “love from a pure heart”?*



What will I pass on to my family? To my GRIP partner? To my friend?

Week 9

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”****1Timothy 1:12-20**

*“The glorious gospel of the blessed God” (1:11) is the power of God for salvation and transformation (Rom 1:16). How does Paul’s life prove that I am never beyond the reach of God’s grace (1:13; Acts 9:1; 26:11; Gal 1:13)? Paul viewed himself as the foremost (chief) sinner. Not that ‘he was’, but that ‘he is’. Is this how I view myself (Matt 5:3; 1Peter 5:5b)? What response does God’s superabundant grace stir in me today?*



What will I pass on to my family? To my GRIP partner? To my friend?

Week 9

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”****1Timothy 1:15 (NKJV)**

*This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.*



It was my failure to grasp the grace shown to me in the gospel that almost destroyed my marriage.

My wife and I have been married for eight wonderful years. Plus two other ones, for a total of ten. Those first two years were rough. I remember my wife and I crooning to each other a few months before we got married, "We never fight—we must be perfect for each other!" And we didn't fight. At that point. Throughout the entire year of our dating relationship and engagement, I cannot remember a single altercation.

Well, we made up for lost time during the first six months of our marriage.

After grueling it out for a couple of years, in desperation we went to see a biblical counselor. He opened his Bible to 1 Timothy 1:15 where Paul describes himself as the "chief" of sinners (NKJV). He then asked us if we thought Paul was exaggerating when he called himself that. My doctrine of the Bible made me want to say "no," since the Bible is inerrant and Paul doesn't exaggerate. But how could Paul really think he was a bigger sinner than Judas Iscariot or Nero?

Still completely unaware of where the counselor was going with this, I said, "I don't know."

He said that Paul was indeed telling the truth in saying that because in his perception, he was the biggest sinner. Paul was better acquainted with his own sinfulness than he was anyone else's. Of course Paul knew, theoretically, that other people were every bit the sinner he was, but he was so much more aware of his sin than he was theirs. When Paul thought about a need for grace, he didn't think of others first—he thought of himself.

Our counselor explained that both my wife and I saw one another, and not ourselves, as "the chief of sinners." I could see my wife's sin, but I was blissfully oblivious to my own. If I had understood my own deep need for grace, I would have more naturally extended grace to her.

The counselor's next words exploded in my heart like a bombshell: "When you really believe the gospel, you see that you are first a sinner and only secondarily sinned against. The problem in your marriage is that neither of you seems aware of how much you've been forgiven. Because you haven't really tasted grace, you won't extend grace to each other. You need to go back to the gospel."

Our marriage problems were gospel problems. That afternoon my wife and I began to explore more intimately the grace that had been extended to us in Christ. Through that study our entire disposition toward one another changed. We began to see ourselves as first, sinner, and second, sinned against; and as we became more aware of our own need for grace, we became more willing to extend it to each other.

We still hurt and disappoint one another. We still get impatient. But when I think about how much God has forgiven me of, what I'm asked to forgive her of doesn't seem that substantial. As we stand amazed at what God has done for us in the cross of Christ, we find it hard to stay angry at one another.

Excerpted from Gospel, by J.D. Greear, 2011.  
Chapter 7 (emphasis added)

***"It's hard for me to extend grace to others when I haven't recently understood and tasted my own deep need for grace." Agree or disagree? What step will I take to allow the bottomless grace of the gospel to flow over me and fill me up? What problems (small or large) in my marriage are actually gospel problems? Think about a recent time that I have been offended by my wife, my child or close friend? How did I respond? What would it have looked like to pour a bucket of grace on that offense (Matt 18:21-22)?***

Week 9

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”**

## 1Timothy 2:1-15

*Timothy had a tough assignment: confront wayward elders who were causing dissension and shipwrecking theirs and others' faith (1:3,18-20). Paul tells Timothy to make prayer central (2:1). What does Paul teach about prayer here? How will I bring my prayer life into alignment with this teaching (2:1-8)? What does God desire for all men (2:4)? Pause right now and have a season of prayer using 2:1-8 as a model. Where do I see the Gospel in this passage?*



What will I pass on to my family? To my GRIP partner? To my friend?

Week 9

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## “Father, grip my heart today.”

### Psalm 121

*The Book of Psalms is one of the most personal, emotionally rich, and spiritually honest parts of the Bible. A place where human experience meets the Divine. The prayers, songs, and poems are raw and authentic conversations with our Heavenly Father. “Lord, As I read this Psalm today, may I engage it as a living prayer that helps me worship You.”*



*What does this psalm reveal about God's character? What insight into following God does this Psalm give to me?*

*How do I relate to the emotions expressed in this psalm?*

*How might this psalm shift my perspective on my current life situation or challenges?*

*What truths in this psalm can I use in my worship or prayer life today?*

Week 10

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”****1Timothy 3**

*By laying out standards for church leaders, Paul makes it easier for Timothy to identify the “savage wolves... speaking perverse things” that Paul warned of in Acts 20:29-30. Which spiritual leaders have touched my life? Which of these 1Timothy 3 qualities stand out in those men’s lives? Whether a church leader or not, how does my life currently match up these qualifications? Can any valid accusation of wrongdoing be made against me? Am I morally and sexually pure? Do money or substances have a hold on me? What connection does Paul make between leading my family and leading in the wider domain of the local church (:4-5)?*



What will I pass on to my family? To my GRIP partner? To my friend?

Week 10

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”****1Timothy 4**

*Paul calls Timothy to combat the chaos in the Ephesian church by modeling genuine Christian faith in word and deed (:6-16). Do I really want my family to follow my example in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity? Why or why not? Which area do I need God to grow me in the most? What does it look like for a man to discipline himself for the purpose of godliness (:7-8; 1Cor 9:24-27)? Notice the “effort” words used in this passage. How vigorously have I pursued godliness this year? What does this tell me about what I value?*



What will I pass on to my family? To my GRIP partner? To my friend?

Week 10

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”****1Timothy 5:1-16**

*Do I have any blind spots in the way I relate to the elderly or the opposite sex (:1-2)? How does my current care for and respect of my aging parents (or spiritual parent) demonstrate my worship of God (:4)? What can I do to assist a widow or widower in my church or neighborhood? Remember, real love takes the initiative, acts sacrificially, to meet real needs (1John 4:10). How important is it that I provide for and manage my family well (4:8; 3:4,5,12)? What is my track record with selfless service (:10)? Is there anything about how I live my life that drags Jesus' name through the mud (:13-15)?*



What will I pass on to my family? To my GRIP partner? To my friend?

Week 10

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Scripture Memory

Hiding the truth of God's Word in my heart is an incredibly valuable resource in my day to day life of following Jesus and keeping in step with His Spirit. The Word of God gives me the power to say no to temptation, to hear the Spirit's leading, and to follow His will.



Think over the last several days. **What truths has God been impressing on me?** Maybe page through the last several days of your GRIP journaling. **How has God been stirring my heart? Where is He getting my attention?**

Could it be that God is saying, *I want you to hide this truth deep in your mind and heart so it becomes part of you?* **What Scripture verse(s) would be meaningful for me to commit to memory so I will have it when I need it the most?**

One impactful way to hide God's word in my heart is to recite it and then pray from it. Maybe there is a word or phrase or truth that the Spirit will use to stimulate me toward specific prayer. Allow the verse to be a jumping off point for communing with God through prayer.

For example, suppose God highlights **1Timothy 6:10**:

**“The love of money is the root of all sorts of evil.”**

***“Lord, help me to release my grasp on the material things in my life and fully embrace You. May my heart be generous like Yours!”***

Week 10

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”**

## Psalm 127 & 128

*The Book of Psalms is one of the most personal, emotionally rich, and spiritually honest parts of the Bible. A place where human experience meets the Divine. The prayers, songs, and poems are raw and authentic conversations with our Heavenly Father. “Lord, As I read this Psalm today, may I engage it as a living prayer that helps me worship You.”*



*What does this psalm reveal about God's character? What insight into following God does this Psalm give to me?*

*How do I relate to the emotions expressed in this psalm?*

*How might this psalm shift my perspective on my current life situation or challenges?*

*What truths in this psalm can I use in my worship or prayer life today?*

Week 11

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”****1Timothy 5:17-6:5**

*In what ways does Paul command me to honor the spiritual leaders in my church (:17-19)? Send an encouraging text today to one of my church leaders (elders, deacons, pastor, etc.). How is Timothy advised to handle the sinning elders (:20-21)? Have I ever seen this in my church? What vetting process does my local church have for choosing leaders (:22-25)? What special danger must I guard against if my employer is a Christian (6:1-2)?*



What will I pass on to my family? To my GRIP partner? To my friend?

Week 11

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”****1Timothy 6:6-20**

*What dire results does the “love of money” bring into a man’s life (:9-10)? What’s the difference between enjoying money and being a lover of money? When have I been tempted to love money? What attitudes must be in place for riches not to become a spiritual liability (:17-19;*

*Mark 10:23; Ps 62:10b)? Twice in this portion of scripture Paul tells Timothy to “take hold” of something (6:12; 19). What? Have I truly taken hold of the abundant life Jesus promised (John 10:10)?*



What will I pass on to my family? To my GRIP partner? To my friend?

Week 11

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## “Father, grip my heart today.”

### Psalm 139

*The Book of Psalms is one of the most personal, emotionally rich, and spiritually honest parts of the Bible. A place where human experience meets the Divine. The prayers, songs, and poems are raw and authentic conversations with our Heavenly Father. “Lord, As I read this Psalm today, may I engage it as a living prayer that helps me worship You.”*



*What does this psalm reveal about God's character? What insight into following God does this Psalm give to me?*

*How do I relate to the emotions expressed in this psalm?*

*How might this psalm shift my perspective on my current life situation or challenges?*

*What truths in this psalm can I use in my worship or prayer life today?*

Week 11

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Drawing Near

Hebrews 4:16

Today is set aside to pause and enjoy the nearness of God. To prayerfully recognize, reflect on, and respond to what God has been drawing my attention to.



### Recognize

First, take some moments to look back over the past 9 days of journaling. What words keep bubbling up? What thoughts or ideas does God keep bringing to my attention? What does He seem to be saying to me through the pages of Titus? What has been on my heart in a big way recently? What life situation or circumstance is God drawing my attention to?

### Reflect

Next, reflect on these words WITH God in prayer. Ask God: *Why do these words/ideas/thoughts keep bubbling up? Why Here? Why Now? What specifically do You want me to hear?*

### Respond

Continue in unhurried, prayerful reflection. Ask God: *How do you want me to respond?* If you find it meaningful, write your prayer response back to your loving, heavenly Father. This response time might look like....

- Praise and thanksgiving for His blessings
- Confession and repentance for some sin(s)
- Surrender and yielding to what He is pressing on me.
- Crying out to Him in my struggle

Week 11

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Life Assignments

### James 1:22-25

22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. 24 For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. 25 But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

*In your journaling time today we want you to choose a life assignment to help you move closer to your family/family like key relationship. Each of these life assignments could supplement an action point you already have. The point of this day is to identify a meaningful life assignment and commit to doing it in the next 2 weeks.*

You will find the following life assignments explained in detail in the Appendix on pg. 149. Select one and just do it!

- Listening Exercise
- Speaking life Words
- Writing a letter to a loved one
- Writing legacy Letter
- Interview



## GRIP Gathering Preparation



**Word Highlights** – Over the last 2 weeks of journaling what truth has impacted my heart in a meaningful way?

Why is this truth meaningful to me here and now?

How is God inviting me to respond to this truth?



**Pass On** – Have I expressed what God has impressed on my heart to my family, friend, or GRIP partner?



**Action Point Progress** – Over these past weeks I followed through on the following actions which God put on my heart to prioritize.



**Walking my friend toward Christ** – What step have I recently taken with my friend who is not yet a follower of Christ? What is my next step (Prayer, Care, Share)?

# Section 5



## My Diet in God's Word

## “Father, grip my heart today.”

### The Word of God in My Life

Excerpted from *Deeper*,  
by Dane Ortlund, Chapter 8



*Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.*

**John 17:17**

*Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock.*

**Matthew 7:24-25**

*For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*

**Romans 15:4**

*...and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*

**2Tim3:15-17**

*The Bible contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you...Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully...*

Excerpt from the Introduction of the Gideon Bible

*...continued on next page.*

These reverent words bring us unavoidably face-to-face with the sacred preciousness of the Bible... Scripture is shaping and fueling and oxygenating. It is vital. Jesus prayed, “*Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth*” (John 17:17). Jesus said we need the word of God, which is truth, for sanctification to happen.

In this shifty, uncertain world, God has given us actual words. Concrete, unmoving, fixed words. We can go to the rock of Scripture amid the shifting sands of this life. Your Bible is going to have the same words tomorrow that it does today. Friends can't provide that – they will move in and out of your life, loyal today but absent tomorrow.... But you can roll out of bed tomorrow morning and, whatever stressors slide uncomfortably across your mental horizon as you groan with the anxieties of the day, your friend the Bible is unfailingly steady. It lies there, awaiting opening, eager to steady you amid all the unanswered questions before you that day. It will give you what you need and not evade you.

***You will go deeper with Christ no further than you go into Scripture.***

To read Scripture is to read of Christ. To read it is to hear His voice. And to hear His voice of comfort and counsel is to hear an invitation to become the [man] God has desired you to be.

So, build Bible reading into your life in the very same way you build breakfast into your life. After all, we humans are habit-forming creatures. Our morning coffee, our evening dessert, the way we care for our vehicles, our methods for decompressing such as jogging or movies or bird-watching – and all our habits reflect an acquired taste, over a long period of time, resulting in daily rituals without which we do not feel we have lived a normal day. And I want so say: *Make the Bible your central daily ritual*. Make it your habit without which you have not lived a normal day.

***One of the key rhythms of GRIP is the regular unhurried time alone with God in His Word with a posture to listen and obey. Do I truly own this rhythm? What is my current relationship with the Word of God? What shift do I need to make in my life to make the Bible my “central daily ritual?” What does God say about His Word in His Word?***

One of the best books on spiritual formation and growing in Christ!  
Dane Ortlund, *Deeper*, Crossway, Wheaton, IL, 2021  
ISBN 978-1-4335-7399-6

## “Father, grip my heart today.”

### My Diet in God’s Word

*Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name. **Psalm 86:11***



*And those who know Your name will put their trust in You, For You, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You. **Ps. 9:10***

*“He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; **John 14:21***

*For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. **Hebrews 4:12***

*“The first great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day was to have my soul happy in the Lord.”*

George Mueller, May 1841 diary entry.

Apart from daily reading God’s Word with a posture to know Him, love Him and obey Him, it’s highly unlikely that a man will ever be a vibrant disciple, let alone a disciple maker.

God has graciously given us His special revelation in the Bible (2Tim 3:16). It’s the ONLY source where you can learn God’s character, learn God’s Gospel, and learn who you are in Christ. As we read the Scriptures, they read us (Heb 4:12). The Holy Spirit ministers the Word to us as we read and reflect (Jn 16:13,14). He corrects our wrong thinking; He convicts us of sin; He reminds us of God’s promises; He speaks courage to our heart; He makes our heart happy in the Lord!

We trust that you’ve had regular unhurried time alone with God in His Word over this GRIP season. The GRIP Guide has directed you toward what passage to read. Now, it’s your turn to decide where to be in God’s Word for the next several months. Wherever you choose to be, we strongly encourage you to process what you read through journaling. And it may be helpful for you to be in the same portion of Scripture as your wife or as your GRIP partner.

*...continued on next page.*

Here are some ideas to help you:

- **Finish GRIP Journal Days** - Perhaps you have fallen a bit behind the 5X per week rhythm championed in this GRIP Guide. Finish your journaling days in the GRIP Guide before choosing some other Bible focus.
- **Choose a Bible Book** – Most Bible books were written as a unit. Why not commit to reading a whole Bible book, one passage at a time? The Bible Project videos or a study Bible can provide an overview of the book. Your pace can be determined by the Spirit.
- **Explore a Topic** - Is there a topic you encountered this Fall that you want to further explore? The guys on your GRIP team or the Focused Living staff may be able to suggest passages under a particular topic.
- **Adopt a Reading Plan** – There are many Bible reading Plans available. Some plans are designed to help you read the Bible in a year or read the New Testament in a Year. Other plans might be shorter. Maybe your church has a Bible reading plan related to a sermon series. Again, YouVersion has many options. The plan you choose can certainly go beyond the 3 weeks of this section!
- **Life Passages** – Maybe there are some portions of Scripture that you really want to master in your heart so they will master you. List them and slowly read/ study through them. The Lectio Divina approach (see page 19) might help you meditate on these passages.
- **Devotionals** – A devotional can be helpful as part of your Bible reading diet, if you spend more time reading and pondering the scripture portion versus the human author's thoughts. Many men have been helped by:

*New Morning Mercies* by Paul Tripp (365 days)

*The Passion of Christ* by John Piper (50 days)

*Jesus Calling* by Sarah Young (365 days)

*My Utmost for His Highest* by Oswald Chambers (365)

**Here's my plan for Bible Reading over the next few weeks:**

Week 12

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”**

---

**The Passage I chose**



What will I pass on **to my family?** **To my GRIP partner?** **To my friend?**

**Week 12**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”**

---

**The Passage I chose**



What will I pass on **to my family?** **To my GRIP partner?** **To my friend?**

Week 12

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”**

---

**The Passage I chose**



What will I pass on **to my family?** **To my GRIP partner?** **To my friend?**

**Week 13**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”**

---

**The Passage I chose**



What will I pass on **to my family?** **To my GRIP partner?** **To my friend?**

Week 13

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”**

---

**The Passage I chose**



What will I pass on **to my family?** **To my GRIP partner?** **To my friend?**

Week 13

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”**

*“You shall therefore impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul; and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead.”  
Deuteronomy 11:18*

**Scripture Memory:**

*It glorifies God and blesses our soul to hide his word in our heart so we will have it when we need it the most. Take some moments to review where you've been in the Word the last couple weeks. Is there a particular verse that you want to hide in your heart?*

**The scripture memory verse I chose:** \_\_\_\_\_

Now, slowly read the words of the verse a few times. Scan the surrounding verses to understand the context. How does this truth apply to me? Try writing it out from memory. Finally, personalize this verse by praying it back to God.

What will I pass on to my family? To my GRIP partner? To my friend?

Week 13

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”**

---

**The Passage I chose**



What will I pass on **to my family?** **To my GRIP partner?** **To my friend?**

**Week 13**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”**

---

**The Passage I chose**



What will I pass on **to my family?** **To my GRIP partner?** **To my friend?**

**Week 14**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”**

---

**The Passage I chose**



What will I pass on **to my family?** **To my GRIP partner?** **To my friend?**

**Week 14**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”**

---

**The Passage I chose**



What will I pass on **to my family?** **To my GRIP partner?** **To my friend?**

Week 14

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Father, grip my heart today.”**

- 1) *Use today to catch up if you find yourself a bit behind in your personal reading plan.*

**OR**

- 2) *Sit with your GRIP Guide and Bible open. Page through your journal with a highlighter in hand, underlining what you sense God wants to underline for your life.*



Week 14

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Reflecting Back

### Acts 14:27

*When [Paul and his team] had arrived and gathered the Antioch church together, they began to report all things that God had done with them and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.*



*Like the Apostle Paul, I've just finished a journey with God and with another brother. I see in Acts 14:27 that Paul looks back on his journey through an "I-spy-God" lens. He's ready to rehearse for his sending church "all things God had done with them." Now it's my turn to reflect on my GRIP season and play "I spy God."*

**Turn back to the first day of journaling we did at our first Grip gathering (p. 35). What word(s) did I use to describe my relationship with Christ?**

**What word(s) would I use now to describe my relationship with Christ?**

Evaluation is a wise practice. God modeled it for us at creation ("it is good...it is very good" [Gen 1:10, 21,25, 31]) and the New Testament writers tell us to examine ourselves [1Cor 11:28, 2Cor 13:5; 2Pet 1:10].

**Turn to page 28 and reread, "Evaluating My Season".**

**Where have I seen my love for God grow?** For instance, where am I quicker to obey God and do life His way (John 14:21-24) ?

**Where have I seen my love for others grow?** For instance, what are some instances in which I took the initiative, acted sacrificially, and met a real need in someone's life (1Jn 4:10; Phil 2:3-4)?

Week 14

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Reflecting Back & Looking Ahead

### Proverbs 16:1-3

*The plans of the heart belong to man,  
But the answer of the tongue is  
from the LORD.*

*All the ways of a man are clean in his own  
sight, But the LORD weighs the motives.*

*Commit your works to the LORD  
And your plans will be established.*



**What progress have I witnessed in my GRIP partner that I can encourage him with?**

**What progress did I see in my action points? What steps of obedience do I need to lean in to over the next few months?**

### **Here's my plan for being in God's Word:**

(Scripture passages? Why? When and where will I have my times alone with God? How will I process what I read?)

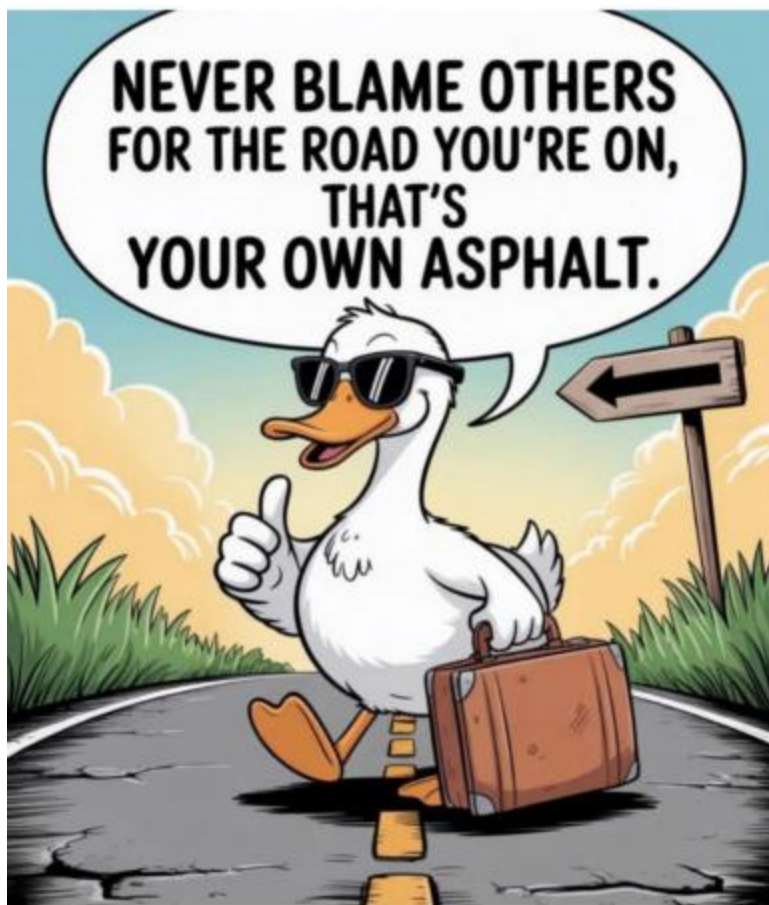
**What brother(s) will I walk this spiritual journey with over the next couple of months?**

## GRIP Gathering Preparation

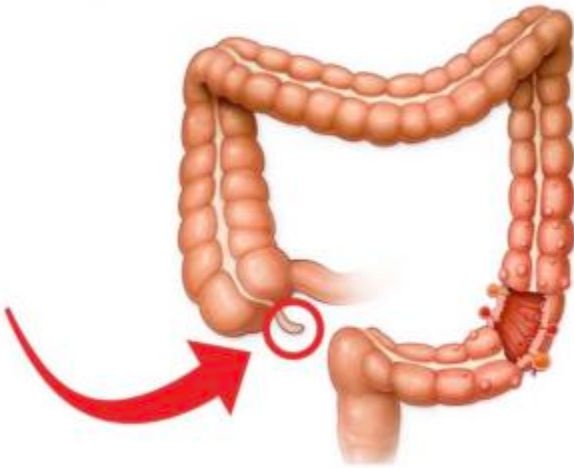
Come prepared to testify how God has been working in your life this season!

- What specific ways has God gripped my heart this season?
- What would I share from my “Reflecting Back / Looking Ahead” on pages 150-151





# Appendix



# Life Assignment: Listening

**Life Assignment:** Sometime over the next 3 days, practice listening to a family member for 10 minutes.

*When I place myself before Scripture, is my spirit ready to listen to what God wants to impress on me? Listening to God sets my heart in the right place to listen to others. Would my family and friends describe me as a 'good listener'? Am I refreshing to be around because I live out the truths of the following passages?*



## Proverbs 17:27-28

One who withholds his words has knowledge,  
And one who has a cool spirit is a person of understanding.  
Even a fool, when he keeps silent, is considered wise;  
When he closes his lips, he is *considered* prudent.

## Proverbs 18:13

One who gives an answer before he hears,  
It is foolishness and shame to him.

## James 1:19

You know *this*, my beloved brothers *and sisters*. Now everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak, *and* slow to anger;



## Listening Exercise

Here's an exercise to help you practice listening. Overemphasizing listening will feel awkward at first. But give it a go. Like most things in life, we improve with practice.

**When:** 10 minute block in the next 3 days

**What:** practice listening to one of your family members talk about a topic of their choice for 10 mins.

**How to get started:** *"I have an assignment for GRIP. We've been learning about listening. My assignment is to listen to a person in our family for 10 mins. May I listen to you? You can talk about any topic that would be meaningful to you. Some examples of topics might be: something you are really excited about*

Why you love [this] ....( hobby; sports team; movie, etc)

a decision you are mulling over

a situation that has annoyed you

a problem you are facing

a book or talk or video that has recently impacted you

a topic you've been seeing in your social media

*The only rule is that you [the Speaker] have to pause now and then to let me summarize what I have heard so far.*

### RULES FOR LISTENER:

Don't ask any questions.

Don't interrupt.

Don't give your opinion or your advice

Don't try to solve their problem.

Don't share a 'helpful' story or experience that relates

Don't roll your eyes.

Don't frown.

Don't correct the facts.

Don't prepare a rebuttal in your mind.

Just be present with an attentive look on your face and listen to your family member's words. Also listen to what is behind their words, to their heart (*Why is this important to them?*) Only open your mouth to periodically paraphrase what they are saying. For example,

*"What I hear you saying is..."*

*"Sounds like..."*

**How to End** – When your family member is done speaking, ask, *"Did you feel listened to? Why or Why not?"*

# Life Assignment: Speak Life Words

**Life Assignment:** Read the “Practical ways to Apply the Bible’s teaching on Communication” on the next page. Choose one method and **use it this week**.



*God’s will is a sanctified tongue used for the building up of others. As I read the following Scriptures, what is the Holy Spirit convincing me of?*

## **Proverbs 12:18**

There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, But the tongue of the wise brings healing.

## **Proverbs 15:1,4**

A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger...A soothing tongue is a tree of life, But perversion in it crushes the spirit.

## **Proverbs 16:24**

Pleasant words are a honeycomb,  
Sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

## **Ephesians 4:29**

Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a *word* as is good for edification according to the need of *the moment*, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

## **Colossians 4:6**

Let your speech always be with grace, *as though* seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.

## **1Thessalonians 5:11**

Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

## Practical Ways to Obey God's teaching on the Tongue

### 1) "Life words" when we fail

I'm **SORRY**. I was **WRONG**. Please **FORGIVE** me. I **LOVE** you  
Adopted from Chuck Swindoll radio program

### 2) "Life words" for lifetime encouragement

1. Pay attention – look for positive things
2. Describe the positive you see "You just did..."
3. React with emotion "That makes me feel..."
4. Share an expectation "I believe you are becoming..."
5. Physically touch (i.e. pat on the back, hug)

Adopted from *The 7 Laws of a Learner* (Bruce Wilkinson, 1992)

### 3) Speaker Listener Technique

Communicating Safely and Clearly

#### Rules for Both of You

1. The speaker has the floor
2. Share the floor
3. No problem solving

#### Rules for the Speaker

1. Speak for yourself
2. Talk in small chunks
3. Stop and let the listener paraphrase

#### Rules for the Listener

1. Paraphrase what you hear
2. Don't rebut. Focus on the Speaker's message.

Adopted from *A lasting Promise* (Scott Stanley, 1998)

### 4) Words + Tone + Expression + Body Language

"Real encouragement flows out of a relationship. It is more than a word now and then; it's your smile, expression, and very presence that communicates encouragement...*guard your tongue and your tone*. Learn to measure your response against the excitement on your child's face."

Adopted from *Growing Kids God's Way* (Gary Ezzo)

### 5) Messages Only a Father can Give (a 1000 times)

To Son: You have what a takes!

To Daughter: You are beautiful

Taken from a John Eldridge booklet

### 6) Giving a Daily Blessing

I love you and I'm proud to be your daddy(son, husband, brother)

Adopted from Joe White, Promise Keeper speaker

## Life Assignment: Writing a Letter to Your Loved One

***Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due*** - Proverbs 3:27a



When the topic is “words”, most commonly our minds think of the spoken word. But the power of words is also displayed in the written form. This **Life Assignment is to write a letter to one of your key family relationships.**

What you write about will be personal and will consider the relationship you have. It would be fitting and appropriate to express how highly you **value** this person and what you have been **praying** for this person. The tone of the letter would evidence your commitment to **humility**, which is all about emphasizing the other person. The details of the letter will show how much you’ve been observing and **listening**.

This is a completely personal assignment. There’s no right way or wrong way to do it. Here are questions to get your juices flowing:

What are you observing about this person’s life right now?  
 What do you really appreciate about this person?  
 How can you encourage them spiritually?  
 Are there recent accomplishments to highlight?  
 Does this person need a big dose of hope?  
 How can you express that you are “for them” and “with them”?  
 Have you told them of your affection for them? Your pride in them?  
 Is there something you could say to inspire them into the future?  
 Is there a Bible verse or two that would bless them in this season?

Bottomline: write from the heart and don’t leave big things unsaid.

The details are completely up to you. Many will choose to type this on a computer, but you may also feel like writing it out in your own handwriting. Perhaps it will be helpful to jot some bullet points down first and then craft the letter from those points. Some may decide that mailing the letter would make it special. Others may choose to hand deliver it to their family member and allow them to read it in your presence.

The bullseye of this life assignment is to use your words to bless. Take your time and let the humble and gentle Christ in you guide your thoughts.

## Life Assignment: Writing Legacy Letters

The ultimate statistic is that 1 out of 1 dies! Nothing gets our attention like death! Coming face to face with your death puts life into proper perspective. Suddenly, the things that once clamored for your attention evaporate and the vital priorities of life rise to the surface. God is calling you to walk with Him on both sides of the grave. **A MAN IS**

**SINCERELY READY TO LIVE WHEN HE IS TRULY PREPARED TO DIE.** Only when a man

is ready to die (unresponsive to his greeds) will he ever live to serve the needs of others. That is why Jesus so boldly announced, *“Truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.”* (John 12:24) *“I have come to give life and to give it abundantly.”* (John 10:10)



God is moving men to get their eyes off of their transient *positions*, temporary *possessions*, fleeting *pleasures*, and diminishing *productivity* in order to focus on an eternal **PERSON**. Everyday the Lord seeks to get your attention away from the temporary and onto the eternal. This move is so vitally strategic and so eternally significant that if you do not ask the following question and apply the answer you will never become all that God intended you to be. **How much of your life savings would you use to decorate your room at Motel 6?** (Jesus is the only one who really WILL ‘keep the light on’ for you!) Why will the answer to this question determine the focus of your life and how you will live this year? How much of your God given resources (time, treasures, talents) are you using to decorate and fix up your motel room? It is our sincere hope that this life assignment will help you invest more of your life resources in eternal relationships and responsibilities which will outlast you rather than spending your life on that which will last only temporarily.

*Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.* James 4:14

*...be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time...* Ephesians 5:15,16

*Death and life are in the power of the tongue...* Proverbs 18:21

*Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.* Proverbs 16:24

The Scripture is clear that our time on this earth is short in comparison with eternity. Not only has God ordained both the beginning and end of our days, but He longs to walk with us through the “dash” that represents this life! Navigating this life with a view towards our death inspires us to live well this short life God has given us. ***“He has also set eternity in their heart...”*** Eccl 3:11

One practical way to begin with the end in mind is to write a “legacy letter” to our immediate family members (i.e. spouse, children, siblings, parents, etc.) to be opened upon our death.



Some of the advantages of this exercise are:

1. It provides an opportunity to express “life words” even after your death that will continue to impact the people you love long after you are gone. (Prov 18:21)
2. It provides a focused way to think about the people God has placed in your life. Since you are not dead yet, you will gain a new appreciation for each of these people. Perhaps God will light in you to let Him transform some of the ways you relate before it is too late!
3. It brings some specific things to mind that you may want to communicate to these individuals NOW! ☺ (If you want to do this formally, see the life assignment entitled, *Family – Giving a Blessing* at [www.focusedliving.com](http://www.focusedliving.com))

### **What should I Communicate?**

Prayerfully ask God to help you know what you should emphasize in your letter. The apostle Paul models this when he writes:

Pray that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak...let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person. Colossians 4:4,6



What you will write about will be personal and will take into account the relationship you have with your spouse or child. Highlight what the person means to you and include personal insights into your relationship with him or her. This is a great forum for encouragement, instilling values and casting vision. This is also an appropriate venue to point your child or spouse back to the character of God.

Naturally, some of the content in your letter to your child will vary based on your child's season of life, gender, and spiritual state. For instance, if your child has not yet trusted Christ, it would be appropriate to clearly share the Gospel so the child hears it directly from the heart of a father. If a child is a teenager, it would be appropriate to speak of future life seasons, like marriage or parenting. The bottom line is that there is no real formula for the letter! Just write from the heart and don't leave big things unsaid.

To jump start you, we have included several examples below. Please read through them to get a sense of what you would want to emphasize. Then, get out your box of tissues and start writing!

### **Joshua's legacy words to the leaders of Israel**

Now it came about after many days, when the LORD had given rest to Israel from all their enemies on every side, and Joshua was old, advanced in years, that Joshua called for all Israel, for their elders and their heads and their judges and their officers, and said to them... *"Now behold, today I am going the way of all the earth, and you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one word of all the good words which the LORD your God spoke concerning you has failed; all have been fulfilled for you, not one of them has failed."* Josh 23:1,2,14

### **King David's legacy words to his son, Solomon**

*As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever...* Then David said to his son Solomon, *"Be strong and courageous, and act; do not fear nor be dismayed, for the LORD God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you nor forsake you..."* Then he died in a ripe old age, full of days, riches and honor; and his son Solomon reigned in his place.

1Chronicles 28:9, 20; 29:28



### **Example 1: To a Teenage Daughter**

Dear Susan, Sweetie, I wanted to write this letter to you as one more way I can show my love for you. I also write this to encourage you to keep growing in and loving the Lord Whom I am with now in eternal splendor. Ever since you were born it has been my highest privilege to be your Dad. Every day while I was alive I thanked God for giving you to me as a gift, and what a precious gift you are! I loved every moment of being around you and watching you mature into a beautiful and mature woman of God.

Though I am with the Lord as you read this letter, I want you to know that I am mindful of your great heart for Him, your desire to obey Him in every area of life, your compassionate love for the people He puts around you, and your vision to serve Him whole heartedly someday as a wife and mother in missions. Honey, I am so proud of you and the godly woman you have become, and I trust that you will continue to allow Jesus, and Jesus only, to be the greatest prior-ity of your life. You have indeed become a WOW (Walk On Water) Woman!

As you continue to live your life for Him, always remember our tickle fights, running together, playing soccer, holding hands at the mall, learning to drive, hundreds of back rubs, water skiing, praying together before your first date, family vacations, talking into the wee hours of the morning, prayer walks, throwing the ball, choosing a college, graduations, and just being buddies.

Susan, there have been two passages of Scripture that have burned in my heart and mind because of my love for you which I want to give you. The first one is all of Psalm 139, especially verse 17, which says, “How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them!” Oh Susan, take the truth of these words to heart. Let your heart and mind be consumed with our Lord’s gracious and positive thoughts about you, for you are indeed a very precious part of His creation. Let your security be grounded in God’s love for you and His thoughts about you. The second passage is my life verse found in Exodus 33:11 which says, “Thus the Lord would speak to Moses face to face just as a man speaks to his friend.” Honey, all I can say is that the Lord desires to be with you and speak with you daily just as though He was your best friend. Good friendships have always been a deep desire of your heart and I just wanted to remind you of something that you already know, and that is that even though Jesus is your God and creator, He still is your greatest friend.

Keep loving your mother as she is the greatest of all women on earth. Take care of her for me, Susan. And thanks also for being an outstanding big sister to Linda by being both an example and friend to her. I will be seeing you soon, Honey. Walk with joy every day basking in His love, enjoying His grace, and receiving His forgiveness. Invest your life in the people He puts around you so that you can be used of God to bring many to Himself while teaching them to be committed followers and disciples. And never forget that the Lord must be the center of your life. So enjoy serving Him with your whole heart. I love you, am so proud of you, and rejoice in the day we will be together as a family with the Lord forever. It won’t be long now, so give your life to others so that you can bring a few with you to heaven! See you soon. All my love, DAD.



**Example 2: To a Toddler Son**

Dear Daniel, You are 21 months old next week! When you are old enough to read this letter, I will no longer be here on earth. I will be with God in heaven. God is the only one who knows when it is time for us to leave the earth and go to be with Him in heaven forever. God loves me and you and Joey and Mommy and only wants the best for each of us.



I want you to know in the deepest part of your heart that I love you and I am super proud to be your daddy. I love holding you, wrestling with you, swinging you, hearing you try to talk, watching you be busy, giving you baths, changing your diapers, taking showers with you, having you sit in between my legs on the floor and put your shoes on, reading to you, having you follow me around, watching you get all messy while you eat, smelling your baby scent, holding you in the pool, letting you fall on me yelling ‘timber.’

You are a very happy boy. Everyone that interacts with you (Aunt Susan, Pop Pop and Mom Mom and Grandpa Burns and Grandma Burns, those who watch you in the nursery at church, Miss Jill who watches you for 5 hours, Monday through Friday)...they all say that you are a happy little fellow. You have a great smile and a laugh that is contagious. You are so smart too. You problem solve very well. You really like to line up cars and drive them around. You like balls a lot too. Recently you started climbing the ladder up the sliding board. Usually you wait for me to hold your hands before you slide down. You have a great life ahead of you. You already have a good foundation. You love to pray at meal times with Joey and you love hearing and trying to say, “In Jesus’ name, Amen.” Someday you will understand God’s great love for you. I am including a summary of God’s good news here so you can hear it from your dad. Your mom and I have prayed that God would draw you to Himself someday. It is the best thing and most important thing in all of your life. It is awesome being Sam Burn’s son. But it is even MORE Awesome to be God’s son! I encourage you to talk to your mother about these things and ask any questions you have about the Bible and the good news.

**The Good News from Romans 3:19-26**

1. No one can be right with God by being good (Romans 3:20)
2. God provides a way to be in a right relationship with him apart from “trying to be good enough” (Romans 3:21)
3. This “way” is through faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 3:22)
4. This way is available to everyone on the same basis because all people fall short of pleasing God (Romans 3:23)
5. This “way” is a free gift of God (Romans 3:24; 6:23)
6. Grace is free to us, it cost God a lot – the death of his son, Jesus

7. God's wrath was directed at Jesus (who took on your sin). God's wrath will never be directed towards you!

My prayer for you continues to be that someday you will understand this Good News and believe in Jesus with all of your heart and soul. I also pray, that this Good News will continue to remind you that you can never do anything to earn God's favor more and you can never do anything to cause God to love you any less. This is the most important decision you will ever make and is the most important relationship you will ever have. Believing in Jesus the first time is only the beginning. He longs for you to know Him and to mature in your faith, which takes the rest of your life. I can honestly say that God has never let me down.

As you grow up, I want you to know that I love your mother very much. She is an awesome wife and a super duper great mom. She loves you and Joey so much. Listen to her and obey her. That will please me and God.

Be a good friend to those around you. Relationships are the most important experience here on earth. Learn to listen to your friends and be sensitive to people who might not fit in with the "in crowd." When you get to the age when you want to date, listen to your mom's counsel. Treat any girl you date as a princess. You will learn that God's way is the best way when it comes to relationships. Respect, listen, and do not get physically involved until you are married.

Even though I have only known you for a short time, I have loads of great memories with you. Please know that I am entirely committed to you. I am for you. You will succeed in life. Trust God and rely on His Word, the Bible. You have what it takes! I am proud to have given you the name Burns. I love you and I'm proud to be your dad!

### **Example 3: To a Wife**

Dear Rose, if you are reading this letter, God has taken me home to be with Him. I know your heart is full right now of all kinds of feelings. As I am writing this letter, you and Sam are at a birthday party. I wanted to pause in my day and write this letter that I have been putting off for months.



God made us complete before we had Sam. Sam makes our family bigger, but not more complete. You and I make each other complete as a family. As I write this, I can clearly see that you have made my life complete. If I am now absent, then God the father will fill your void with Himself.

I know that you know how much I love you. But, I will tell you again – I love you. You are so good to me. You are a great wife. I don't know why God gave me the best one, but He did☺ I was serious

when I took my vows to you on our wedding day and God has allowed both of us to keep them:

Rose, I love you and I receive you to be my wedded wife. I accept you as a precious gift from God. I love you with a love that only Christ could place within my heart. I wish to have and hold you, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love you and cherish you as long as we both shall live or until our Lord shall come. I dedicate our marriage and our home to the Lordship of Christ and pledge myself and all that I am in love to you.

As I write this, I have all kinds of feelings. One feeling is regret. I wish that I would have shown you so much more how much you meant to me. I fell short in so many areas (Setting long term goals for us as a couple; Pray more for you and with you; Talk more about everything to find out what's in your heart). You were so patient with me!

Another feeling I have is that I miss you (even as I think about not being around). I understand with my mind that heaven will be a place of perfect contentment, but while I am still here the idea of not being with you makes me sad. What exactly would I miss? There are so many things: when you come to bed without any socks on and your feet are cold; when you come home from shopping and tell me how much money you've "saved us"; getting beat by you in ping pong; playing the clean game; transplanting bushes; going canoeing and letting you sun bathe; taking Sam to the doctors together; walking through the kitchen and not being able to keep my hands off of you; eating pizza together with you on Friday nights; going for a walk around the loop; playing hand and foot against you; saying "Honey, you're so funny"; laughing about the words Sam is saying these days, like "Waz Zat? Ova dare"; Honey, I want the best for you and Sam. Please know that. I want you to feel released to remarry when the time for that comes. When you are ready and God brings another man in your life, please know that I am smiling on you ☺. I know that God will provide just the right person at just the right time. You are an awesome woman of God and a great mom! Yu rock!

We've had some tremendous memories and experiences together. As you recall them, know that I love you very, very much. I honestly can't imagine life without you, but God has us moving in different seasons now. God's character is weighty in your life and I pray that He would continue to be. I love the words in Isaiah 41:10,

*"Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."*

I Love you. The greatest role in my life has been to be your husband!

**Now, It's Your Turn!**

## Life Assignment: Interview

You are a man who is intentional about his relationship with God. You want to grow, progress, develop, and mature. You're desiring for God to transform you into the man, husband, father, follower that God has called you to be.



One of the tools that God uses to grow us is other members of the Body of Christ whom the Lord has sovereignly placed in our life. Imagine the centuries of untapped wisdom and life experience around you every day just waiting to be passed on to you? Think of the insight, counsel and encouragement that could be yours through a small investment of an hour or two. Christ followers who are wiser, older, experienced, and seasoned! People who have walked with the Lord for decades, grown strong through weakness, softened their character through brokenness and loss, gained perspective through perseverance and been deepened by temptations. People who have integrated life's invaluable lessons into every facet of their being through failure... failures you just may avoid if you listen intently to their hearts and zealously process their lifetime of understanding.

So, here's our life assignment challenge:

**Interview a Christ-following person / couple in your life who is further along their life journey than you are.** You might know the person / couple you choose to interview well or maybe you've admired them from a distance. If you are married, we strongly recommend you do this as a couple and interview another couple. Make it a date night!

1. Determine what couple / individual you would like to interview
2. Reach out to this couple and explain your desire to interview them. (Feel free to mention that this is a GRIP life assignment.)
3. Arrange the meeting time and place. We recommend a comfortable quiet setting. Perhaps the interview takes place over a meal or dessert.
4. In advance, make a list of questions to ask (The next two pages provide a bunch of sample questions...or create your own. The point is to hear answers to questions you REALLY have.)
5. Have a great time listening (and taking down a few notes.)
6. Send the couple / person a thank you note afterwards.

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS

### General Questions

- Knowing what you know now about life, what would you tell your younger self when you were about my age?
- Are there any "must read" books in the area of discipleship, marriage, parenting etc. that you would recommend?
- How have you navigated the difficult decisions in your life?
- How do you balance the different demands and pressures of life? How have the pressures and demands changed over the years?
- What would you say has been your greatest success in life? To what do you attribute it?
- What would you say has been your greatest failure in life? What would you do over and why?
- Who is a hero of yours? What makes them a hero?
- What advice would you give to me in my season of life?

### Questions relating to Spiritual Life

- How did you first come to Christ?
- Where you are in your spiritual journey now?
- Did your children see you praying on your knees? Individually or as a couple?
- Did you do family devotions? What did that look like? How was that time received by your kids?
- How intentional were you to teach your kids the Bible?
- How much of your conversation, in average day, is about eternal things?
- What does your devotional time look like? (i.e. when, where, what)
- What have you found to be the most fruitful way of leading your family spiritually?
- What does a typical Sabbath day look like for you?
- Who are some of the people who have had the most influence on you spiritually?
- What's the most impactful truth the Lord has taught you in the past few months?
- How do you maintain your spiritual vitality? What spiritual rhythms are most meaningful to you?
- Have you ever been discipled? What was it like? Have you ever discipled someone else? How?
- What is your favorite passage of Scripture? Why?
- Who is your favorite Bible character? Why?
- What has been the biggest test of your faith in the past few years?
- What ways have you found to be effective in sharing the Gospel with your friends?

### Questions relating to Marriage

- How have you seen your marriage grow?
- Have you had an especially hard season in your marriage? How did you navigate it?
- How do you define ‘success’ in marriage?
- What would be your one piece of advice on marriage?
- Sex, money, in-laws and religion are 4 typical problem areas of marriages. How have you navigated these land mines?
- How did you come to agree on how you would discipline your children?
- Do you know your spouse’s love language? How has this been important in your marriage?
- How do you maintain your romance?
- What do you do as a couple when you are not unified with each other on a particular issue or decision?
- Who handles the finances in your home? Do you live on a budget? How does that practically look for you?
- How do you encourage each other spiritually?
- What have you learned about praying together?
- What has helped you the most in fulfilling your role in the marriage?
- What resources have you found helpful to improve your parenting? (i.e. websites, books, ministries, conferences, rhythms, etc)

### Questions relating to Parenting

- What was the hardest season for raising your children? How do you define success here?
- What one incident with one of your children stands out for being the hardest to deal with? Were you on the same page, parenting wise, on how to deal with it?
- If you have boys and girls, which was the hardest to parent? Why?
- What were your prayers for your children when they were young? What are your prayers for them today?
- If each of you could change one thing you did in parenting, what would it be?
- What is your greatest strength as a parent? What is your greatest weakness?
- What would be your one piece of advice on parenting?
- What areas, looking back, were you too hard on your children or too hard on a particular child? What area were you too easy?
- How did you discipline your kids?
- Did you ever compare yourselves with other parents? What did you learn?

- What was the hardest part about raising teenagers? Why? How did you navigate it?
- Have any of your children had any health or addiction issues? How did you deal with it?
- How did you motivate your children in their youth? As teenagers? (physically, mentally, emotionally, financially, spiritually?)
- How and when did you talk to children about dating? Sex? Marriage?
- What would your advice be on setting boundaries concerning electronic use by your children? (TV; computer, phone, apps, social media, etc)
- How and when did you teach your kids about stewardship and money?
- Have any of your children rejected your view of Christianity? How have you handled it?
- When your children lied to you, how did you deal with it?
- What kinds of boundaries did you set when your kids went to their friend's houses?
- Do you have a favorite child? How did you deal with favoritism?
- How and what role are you playing to helping your grandkids come to Christ to 'turn out well'?
- How did/do you balance love and discipline with your kids?
- What are the most important lessons you learned growing up which you are determined to teach your children?
- How do you avoid child-centered parenting?
- What do you do to reduce the negative effect of Screen time on your family?
- Do you have any hints on how to help a child learn how to share things?
- What resources have you found helpful to improve your parenting? (i.e. websites, books, ministries, conferences, rhythms, etc)

## Notes

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Key Relationships



Key Resources