

GRIP GUIDE

SPRING 2026



A SEASON OF DISCIPLESHIP

GRIP Discipleship

Spring 2026



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 ————

Feb 2 (SG)*

Feb 16

Mar 9 (SG)*

Mar 30

Apr 20 (SG)*

May 11

*** 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)
2/2(SG) 2/16 3/9(SG) 3/30 4/20(SG) 5/11
- ☐ 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 Titus 3:3-8

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?

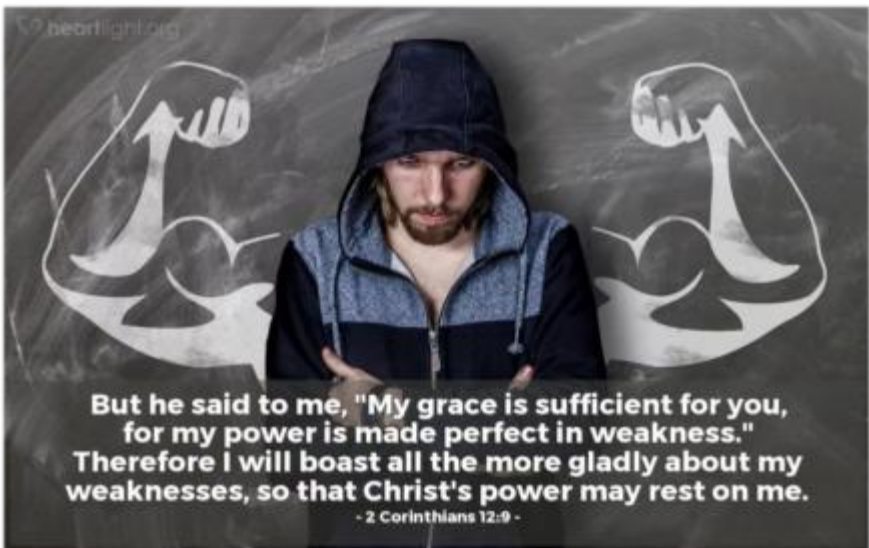
(2Cor10:3, Rom7:23, 1Tim 6:12, Heb 12:1)

- **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 Spring 2026

SECTION 1

One on one's with Jesus
(2 weeks)

Week 1 2/2

Day 1 Colossians 4:2-6

Day 2 Mark 10:17-27

Day 3 Luke 10:25-37

Day 4 John 3:1-21

Day 5 Mark 5:1-20

Week 2 2/9

Day 1 John 4:1-42

Day 2 Digging Deeper: Tailor Made

Day 3 Mark 10:42-52

Day 4 Luke 15:1-32

Day 5 Digging Deeper: My Heart for the One

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- Met with GRIP partner since last GRIP gathering
 - Ready to attend GRIP Gathering #2 on February 16, 2026



SECTION 2

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

Week 3 2/16 Listening to God about my Key Relationships

Day 1	God	Psalms 73 (esp:23-28)
Day 2	Wife (Family)	Colossians 3:12-14, 19
Day 3	Children (Family)	Joshua 4:1-8; 20-24
Day 4	Disciple	Philippians 2:1-4
Day 5	Friend	Romans 9:1-5; 10:1-3

Week 4 2/23 Listening to God about my Key Resources

Day 1	Heart	Psalms 101:1-4
Day 2	Time	Psalms 39:4-5; Ephesians 5:15-17
Day 3	Health	1 Corinthians 6:12-20
Day 4	Wealth	Proverbs 11:28; 1 Timothy 6:17-19
Day 5	Vocation	Matthew 5:13-16

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

Week 5 3/2 Gospel Focus

Day 1	Abide (John 15:1-5) - J.D. Greear
Day 2	Valley of Vision Prayer: Privileges
Day 3	Worship Song: <i>There is a Fountain</i>
Day 4	Refresh
Day 5	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 March 9, 2026

SECTION 3

Acts
(3 weeks)

Week 6 3/9 Acts

- Day 1** Acts 1
 - Day 2** Acts 2
 - Day 3** Acts 3
 - Day 4** Acts 4:1-31
 - Day 5** Acts 4:32-5:11
-

Week 7 3/16 Acts

- Day 1** Acts 5:12 – 42
 - Day 2** Acts 6
 - Day 3** Acts 7
 - Day 4** Acts 8
 - Day 5** Drawing Near
-

Week 8 3/23 Acts

- Day 1** Acts 9:1-31
 - Day 2** My Story
 - Day 3** Acts 9:32-10:23
 - Day 4** Acts 10:24-48
 - Day 5** Refresh with song *Golgotha*
-

- Met with GRIP partner since last GRIP gathering
- Made progress on Action Points
- Ready to attend GRIP Gathering #4 on March 30, 2026

SECTION 4

Acts
(3 weeks)

Week 9 3/30 Acts

Day 1 Acts 11

Day 2 Epistle: James 2:14-26

Day 3 Acts 12

Day 4 Easter Prep: Piper 50 Reasons #10

Day 5 Easter Prep: Piper 50 Reasons #11

Week 10 4/6 Acts

Day 1 Acts 13

Day 2 Acts 14

Day 3 Epistle: Galatians 2:11- 3:5

Day 4 Acts 15:1-35

Day 5 Drawing Near

Week 11 4/13 Acts

Day 1 Acts 15:36-16:40

Day 2 Acts 17:1-15

Day 3 Acts 17:16-34

Day 4 Acts 18:1-22

Day 5 Refresh

- Met with GRIP partner since last GRIP gathering
- Made progress on my Key 3 Action Points
- Ready to attend GRIP Gathering #5 on April 20, 2026

SECTION 5

Acts
(3 weeks)

Week 12 4/20 Acts

- Day 1** Epistle: 1Thessalonians 2
Day 2 Acts 18:23 – 19:41
Day 3 Acts 20
Day 4 Epistle: 2Corinthians 5
Day 5 Acts 21:1-26
-

Week 13 4/27 Acts

- Day 1** Acts 21:27 – 22:29
Day 2 Acts 22:30 – 23:35
Day 3 Acts 24
Day 4 Acts 25
Day 5 I have no other plan
-

Week 14 5/4 Acts

- Day 1** Acts 26
Day 2 Acts 27
Day 3 Acts 28
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 May 11, 2026

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. The point is not to answer each question, but to generate in you a curiosity about what you are reading.

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.

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?

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

Though we will not have any assigned scripture memory this season, hiding God's word in your heart is a useful discipline in the life of a disciple. 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).

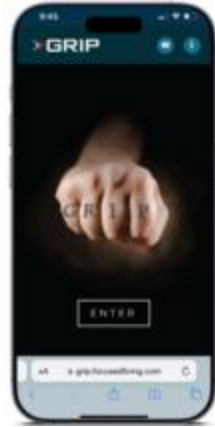
Meet between GRIP gatherings The backbone of GRIP is the face-to-face meeting of GRIP partners where they encourage, challenge, and pray for each other. Since the rhythm of GRIP gatherings is every three weeks, we expect that each GRIP partnership (pairing/triad) will meet face to face at least once 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. 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.

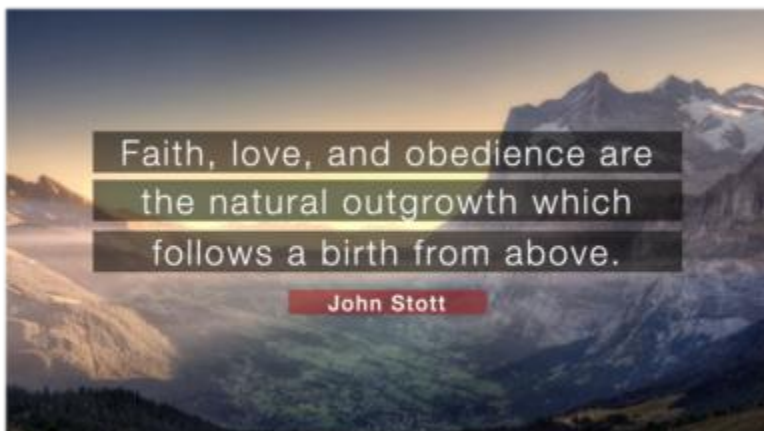
Ready?

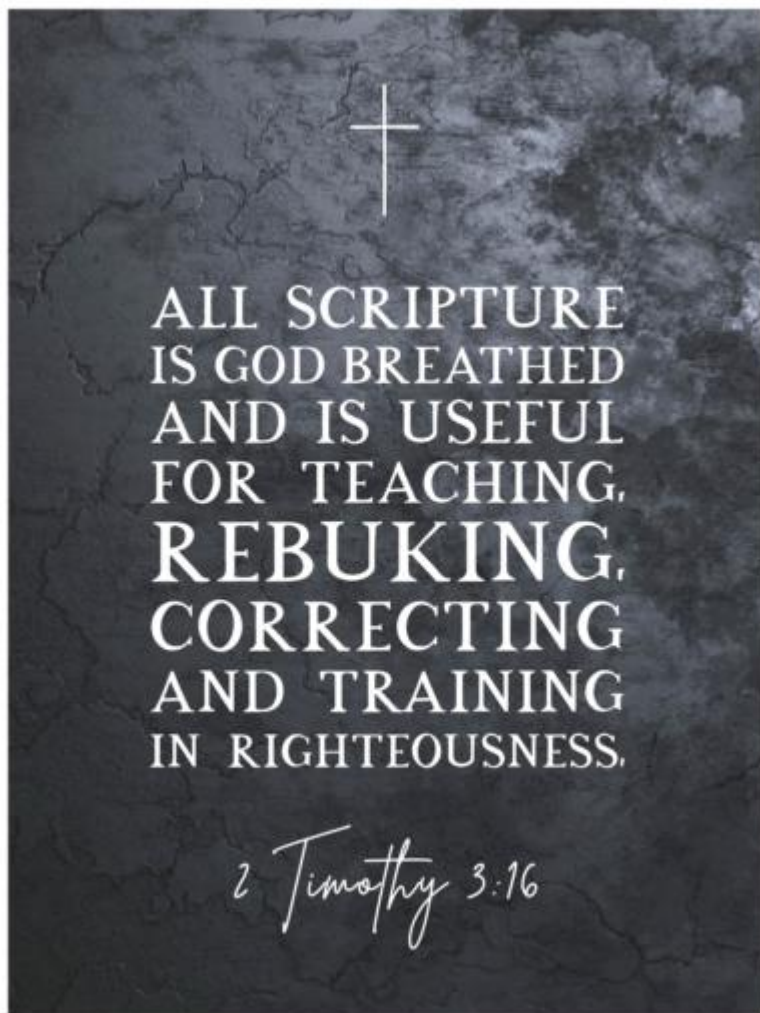
So, there you have it. GRIP is a vehicle to guide your spiritual journey with another man for a season. The concepts you've just read are also summarized in a short Introduction to GRIP video. Scan the QR code to view the video on YouTube.



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



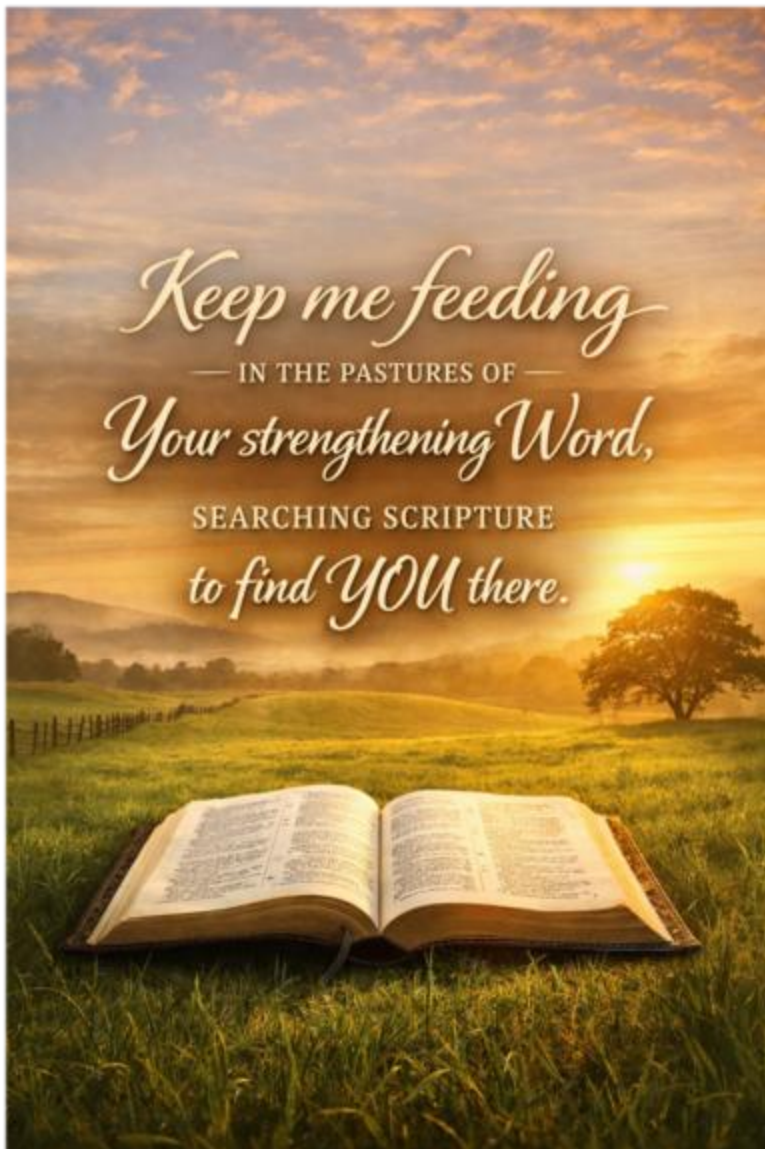
One-on-Ones with Jesus

God has called us to be salt and light to the people He sovereignly brings into our lives (Matt 5:13-16). Some of these are folks have not yet crossed over to eternal life in Christ (John 5:24). We will be encouraging you throughout the next 100 days to make room for these 'not yet in Christ' friends, family members, colleagues, neighbors, and acquaintances. Remember, there was a time when we, too, were strangers to Christ and spiritually dead (Eph 2: 1-13).

One way of raising the temperature for our outreach mindset is to watch Jesus relate with people. During these first two weeks of your GRIP Bible reading, we are giving you a front row seat to a series of Gospel oriented conversations that Jesus had with different individuals. Each day as you read these stories, try to put yourself in the sandals of the person talking to Jesus. **What is going on in that person's heart? How is Jesus addressing the heart? How did He address my heart during the process of my coming to Christ?**

One of our hopes for you this season is that Jesus' 'Prayer, Care, Share' mindset would become your own. May your unhurried times alone with your heavenly Father in front of His Word fuel your soul!





From Valley of Vision, Puritan Prayers, pg. 242

Week 1

Date: _____

“Father, grip my heart today.”**Colossians 3:12-17; 4:2-6**

What insights into my identity does this passage reveal (3:12)? Paul paints a picture of the qualities that characterize a man in Christ (3:13-17). Being around that kind of person would be absolutely refreshing! How have those closest to me experienced these qualities in me recently? Colossians 4:2-6 is one of the clearest teachings on “reaching outsiders” in the whole Bible. Let me not forget that each brother in my GRIP Team, including me, started our lives as outsiders! What does Paul emphasize (4:2-6)? What impact could God make through me if I made myself available to His Spirit to intentionally and practically love one person to Christ this year?



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?

*See bonus content on following page →

Each Person

***5**Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. **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.* Colossians 4:5-6



Notice the last phrase of what Paul says to the members of the church at Colossae: “so that you will know how you should respond to **each person**” (Col 4:6).” Paul encouraged his friends to learn the most effective and natural way to communicate God’s great love in Christ to **each individual person** God had placed in their lives. Though most of us are not gifted

evangelists (Mk 5:19; 1Pet 3:15), we can each practice the Prayer, Care, Share mindset towards one person in our life who is not yet connected to God through Christ. Of course, the Prayer, Care, Share mindset is a tangible way to bless believers as well!

The story has been told about a woman walking along the beach one morning. She came upon a weathered old man stooping to pick up a starfish. She watched as the man would, repeatedly, bend to lift a starfish from the sand and then toss it into the surf. Curious, she approached to ask what he was doing. The old man responded, “Each morning I come to the beach to find starfish stranded by the night’s high tide. And if someone doesn’t carefully throw them back, they will die!” The woman glanced down the beach and exclaimed, “But there are thousands of them.



You can’t possibly throw them all back. What difference will it make?” The old man paused for a moment, then bent down to pick up another starfish lying near his feet. With practiced effort he threw it as far as he could into the sea. Turning to the woman, he grinned and said, “*Made a difference to that one!*” *The Star Thrower*, by Loren E. Eisley, 1978

Lord, may I not overlook the individuals that you have sovereignly placed in my life.

Week 1

Date: _____

“Father, may Your heart for the one be mine”**Mark 10:17-27**

Jesus & the Rich Young Ruler

The next several GRIP journaling days will present me with a front row seat to watch Jesus interact with individuals. May I observe, listen, and learn. And may I grow in my willingness and ability to “respond to each person.”



Luke 18:18 describes the man as a “ruler” and Matthew 19:20 calls him “young”. What’s the difference between a moral man and a Master’s man? Which one am I? What did this man think he was “bringing to the table” in this exchange with Jesus? What do I think I bring to the table in my relationship with Jesus? What, or Who, is gripping my heart other than God? When Jesus looks me in the eye what is my typical heart posture? What lesson(s) did Jesus’ disciples learn?

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

Week 1

Date: _____

“Father, may Your heart for the one be mine”**Luke 10:25-37**

Jesus and the Attorney; Good Samaritan

The lawyer asks the exact same question as the rich young ruler from Mark 10, yet Jesus answers differently? Why? Jesus asks, “How does it read to you” (:26)? He’s asking me the same question every day of GRIP and my answer is fleshed out in my journaling!



What kind of gap exists in my life between knowing God’s Word and living it out? How have I been a neighbor this week? (i.e. Did I take notice of people? Did I feel compassion? Did I act graciously toward someone?

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

Week 1

Date: _____

“Father, may Your heart for the one be mine”

John 3:1-21

Jesus & Nicodemus the Pharisee

*Notice that Jesus doesn't wait for a question
– He just dives in with some deep truth.*

*According to this passage, what does God do
(:3-8) before I can respond to Him (:15-18)
in saving faith? What point is Jesus making
by comparing spiritual birth to the wind?*



*What encourages me from this conversation between Nic and Jesus?
Are there areas of darkness in my life that I love more than the Light
(:19)? What area of darkness do I need to confess to my GRIP
partner?*

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

Week 1

Date: _____

“Father, may Your heart for the one be mine”**Mark 5:1-20****Jesus & the Demon Possessed Man**

Continue to observe, listen, and learn as Jesus relates with yet another individual.



What's my response to the outcast/difficult people in society? Am I willing to let Jesus minister to them through me? Though we each manifest it uniquely, what is the natural state of every person prior to trusting in Christ (Rom 6:20-23; Tim 2:26)? Why did Jesus deny the restored man's request to come with Him (:18-20)? Who have I recently told about God's work in my life and His mercy on me? In what sense am I 'clothed and in my right mind' having been touched by Jesus?

Did the former demon-possessed man share something like this?
“Are you enslaved? I sure was! But this man Jesus, the Son of the Most High God, freed me. If he can free me, I know He can free you from whatever enslaves you!”

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***

Week 2

Date: _____

“Father, may Your heart for the one be mine”**John 4:1-42**

Jesus & the Samaritan Woman

Is there a readiness in my heart to engage people as I go through my day? Do I hesitate to express a need I have, especially with those who are far from Christ? Who in my relational circle is weighed down by life and needs to experience Jesus' promise of hope? Where do I see the “fields white for harvest” (:35)? Note the progression of this woman's relating with Jesus → “Jew” (:9), “sir” (:11), “prophet” (:19), “Messiah” (:29) “Savior” (:42).



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

Week 2

Date: _____

“Father, may Your heart for the one be mine”**Tailor Made**

Over the last week I have read five Bible narratives and observed Jesus deliver truth and grace to a wide array of individuals.



Examine how Jesus modeled personal evangelism. Notice that He customized His words to fit the person to whom He was speaking. He did not squeeze all the people He was trying to reach into a single type of presentation. Instead, He took into consideration their religious background, attitudes, current life situation, gender, past lifestyle baggage, cultural perspectives, misconceptions and personal needs. As the Son of God, He had insight into people's hearts. *"You alone know the hearts of all the sons of men" hearts*" (1Kings 8:39; Acts 1:24; 15:8).

For example, to a spiritually confused religious leader named Nic who didn't understand the big picture, Jesus brought him back to the basics and stressed his need to *"be born again"* (John 3:1-17).

To a lonely, immoral, guilt-ridden, socially ostracized woman seeking to quench the thirst in her soul, He offered living water and the hope that *"whoever drinks of this water will never thirst again"* (John 4:1-26).

To a self-righteous lawyer who was more interested in justifying his lifestyle than loving God, Jesus exposed the true motives of his hard heart by confronting him with the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).

To a rich young ruler who knew just enough of the Bible to be inoculated to its truth, Jesus issued a sharp challenge that cut through all the religiosity and exposed a money-worshipping heart (Mark 10:17-27).

In these last examples from Luke 10 and Mark 10, both the lawyer and the ruler approached Jesus with exactly the same question: *"What must I do to inherit eternal life?"* If ever there were a

situation for Jesus to pull out a one-answer-fits-all Gospel summary, this was it! After all, the same question demands the same stock answer, right? Wrong! Jesus responded to each man differently as He took into account his spiritual understanding and the condition of his heart. He used whatever combination of direct challenge, everyday illustration or probing question He perceived they needed to understand

Evangelism is a dialogue, not a monologue.

at the time. Sometimes he says, *“How do you read it?”* Other times He comes on strong: *“unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”* OR *“Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!”* Then other times he initiates by expressing a need, *“Give me a drink.”* A bunch of times He tells a story.

In all these encounters, notice how Jesus customized the conversation. He listened and tailored His responses to the heart needs of the person. And in each encounter He had a dialogue rather than speaking a monologue? He cared enough to customize so each person could take that next spiritual step towards trusting Him. This is Jesus, the One who came to seek and to save the lost and to be a friend of sinners and to set captives free.

What insight can I apply to my interactions with the people in my life? When it comes to reaching out to unbelievers, what am I afraid of? Jesus, may Your heart for the one be mine!

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

Week 2

Date: _____

“Father, may Your heart for the one be mine”**Mark 10:42-52**

Jesus & the Blind Man Bartimaeus

What was the disciples' attitude toward this blind beggar? What is my attitude toward people who, in my opinion, “bring nothing to the table for me”? What encourages me about Jesus and the blind beggar (:48-52)?



He stopped (vs 49). Why are these two of the most strategic words in scripture? What could ‘stopping’ for a person in my life look like? What shift would need to take place in order for me to live a “stopping” lifestyle?

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

Week 2

Date: _____

“Father, may Your heart for the one be mine”**Luke 15:1-32**

Jesus' Heart for the One

Why did the tax collectors and sinners come near to Jesus? Would it accurately be said of me, “He is a friend of sinners?” What do I learn here about God’s heart for spiritually lost individuals? According to the “lost sheep” and “lost coin” parables, what is the necessary response of a sinner to enter into joy? What do sinning “bad” people (younger son) and sinning “good” people (older son) desperately need? With whom do I most identify in this last parable?



Scan the QR code to watch a captivating 22 min. testimony from an atheist who came to Christ in his 90's. An incredible picture of how God goes after His active enemies to draw them to Himself.



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

Week 2

Date: _____

“Father, may Your heart for the one be mine”**My Heart for the One**

I've just spent two weeks watching Jesus deliver truth and grace to individual after individual. Jesus gauges each person's heart and tailors His response.



In Luke 15:4 Jesus challenged His disciples with this provocative question, *“What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture, and go after the one which is lost, until he finds it?”* The heart of a shepherd for a physically lost sheep mirrors the heart of God for a spiritually lost person. Scripture says: “Be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us...” (Eph 5:1-2). It's safe to conclude that Yahweh desires me to join Him in retrieving a spiritually lost person in my life.

Who is my one? Who is the one I will ‘go after’ this Spring? Who does God want to bless through me? Who is the one I will pray for, care for, and share with? A neighbor? A friend? A family member? A work associate? A vendor? An acquaintance from church? A teammate? A classmate? My spouse?

What if Jesus Himself looked me in the eye and said, *“I am returning for My second coming in exactly four months. All who have yet to repent of their sins, believe in My Gospel and receive My forgiveness will spend eternity separated from My Father's love in a literal place called Hell!”* Who from my circle of relationships would I “go after” to share the Gospel?

Put the initials of “my one” in the life saving ring to the right. And make this my daily prayer: ***“Father, help me to prayerfully keep the face of this friend etched on my heart as I journey through GRIP.”***



If I don't have a person in my circle right now who is not in the Lord, then make this my daily prayer: ***“Father, who do You want to bless through me today?”***

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?

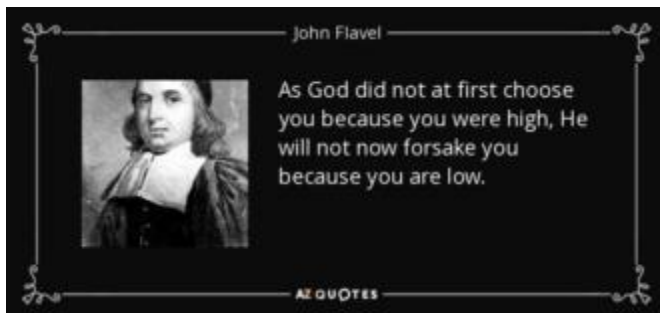


Pass On – Have I expressed what God has impressed on my heart to my family, friend, or GRIP partner?

Section 2

The Hand





Week 3

Date: _____

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Key Relationship: God

Psalm 73 (esp:23-28)

What can I learn about relating to God from Asaph's experience? Is God's presence and nearness a treasure to me?



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.

- Jesus and the Holy Spirit are interceding for me (Rom 8:26, 34) with the Father. As I picture myself eavesdropping on that intercession, what specifics do I hear (John 17:9-26)?
- Is my heart overwhelmed with His holiness (Luk 5:8; 18:9-14; Is 6:1-8)? Do I go beyond just confessing sin and truly repent (Luk 19:5-9)? Is my heart soft toward God?
- Do I daily experience “keeping in step with the Spirit” (Gal 5:16-26)? How often do I think about God during the day?
- 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)?

Week 3

Date: _____

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Key Relationship: Family / Family-Like

Colossians 3:12-14,19

Are the people closest to me experiencing the “fresh air” of Christ-like character?



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 helping my wife come to, and grow in, Christ? (Eph 5:23-27; 1Pet 3:8)
- Do I know what is on this person's heart in this season of life i.e. dreams, desires, hopes, headaches (1Pet 3:7)?
- How am I regularly taking the initiative, acting sacrificially, and meeting the real needs in this person's life? (Eph 5:25; 1John 4:10; 1Pet 4:8).
- 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

Joshua 4:1-8; 20-24

Israel is headed into battle, yet what is God concerned with? How important is “passing on” the truths of God’s works and character to the next generation?



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.

- Am I living my life in such a way as to recognize that my priorities, decisions, actions, words, attitudes and relationships are making an impact for generations to come?
- Do I desire for my kids to have the life I have in Christ (Phil 4:9; 1Cor 11:1; Heb 13:7)? Do I regularly pass on what God is showing me in a way that’s meaningful to them (Col 3:16)? Is conversation about God a normal occurrence in my home (Deut 6:5-9)?
- If character is more caught than taught, what am I modeling (Eph 4:1-3; 1Tim 3:1-7)?
- Do I communicate truth and grace as I discipline (John 1:14; Heb 12:6-11; Prov 13:24)? Do I recognize that “rules without relationship lead to rebellion and resentment?” Josh McDowell (Luke 15:25-32)

Week 3

Date: _____

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Key Relationship: Believing Man

Philippians 2:1-4

*Self-focused discipleship is nonsense.
What will fuel me to continually look out for
my GRIP partner?*



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.

- In what tangible ways can I demonstrate my commitment to the spiritual success of my Christian brother?
- What will it cost me to make room in my life for this discipleship relationship (2Tim 3:10)?
- How might God change me as I invest in another man (Pr 27:17)? What would success look like after this season of investment?
- What has kept me in the past from going ALL IN with a discipleship relationship? What fears or attitudes would keep me from being transparent with this man?

Week 3

Date: _____

“Father, grip my heart today.”**Key Relationship: Unbelieving Friend****Romans 9:1-5; 10:1-3**

How invested am I in the salvation of my unsaved friends? What do I learn from Paul's example?

**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 life convey Jesus Christ as my supreme treasure (Col 1:17-18)? Is the Gospel fresh to my soul today, compelling me to share it with others?
- 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)
- How will I make room in my life to journey with this person? What will I say “no” to in order to say “yes” to this person?
- 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?

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?

Psalm 101:1-4

God sees me completely—not just my actions, but my heart. He knows my motives, my struggles, and my sincerity at every moment. As I live before Him, is my heart genuine and whole? Am I living in authenticity and integrity before the One who knows me best?

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 care more about what others think than living with God as my Audience of One (Gal 1:10)? Am I tempted to make myself look better than I really am (2Tim 3:5)?
- 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?
- Have I allowed any good thing to become an idol in my life? Where am I giving satan a foothold (Eph 4:27).
- Am I trusting God’s sovereign provision and protection for my life (Mat 6:25-34; Hab 3:17-19; Ps 145)? Do I cast my cares on God and experience His peace? (Phil 4:6-7; 1Pet 5:8)

“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?



Psalm 39:4-5; Ephesians 5:15-17

Am I being intentional with how I'm living today? How do my actions reflect that I'm living with eternity in mind?

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 conspicuously absent from my calendar? (Ps 90:12; 1Pet 4:7-8)
- Marginless living is satan's victory. Does God get a busy signal when He calls me? Do I enjoy unscheduled "moments" in my day?
- 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)
- Does my calendar reflect what I say I value? Where do I see relationships on my calendar?
- In what season of life am I (Eccl 3:1-11)? What time commitments should I be giving myself to in this season of life?

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)?



1Corinthians 6:12-20

Have I thought about my body as something God has entrusted to me for His glory? As a steward of this gift, what would an honest update on my stewardship look like?

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.

- In what ways does my physical health limit my energetic investment in relationships? How can I pursue a health step?
- 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)
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how is my nutrition? (Krispy Kreme vs. organic garden). What one change to my diet must I make?
- Am I exercising at least 3X per week for 30 minutes? Has working out and building my body become an idol?

“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?



Proverbs 11:28; 1Timothy 6:17-19

Am I allowing my current financial circumstances to push me toward God or have I allowed finances to get in the way of my relationship with God?

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?



Matthew 5:13-16

In my current workplace or place of service, how do my words, attitudes, and actions reflect Christ to those around me (i.e. clients, colleagues, vendors, boss, teammates)? In what specific ways am I being “salt and light”?

Further Reflection on this key resource

Which question does my heart long to answer?

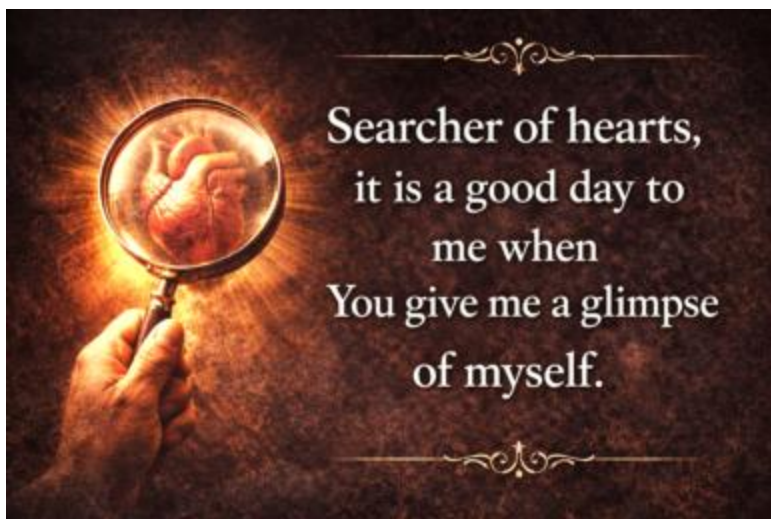
Circle 1 or 2 questions I want to reflect on during my personal retreat.

- Am I using my gifts and talents? How is God sanctifying me through my job. Do I understand that being satisfied with God will help me to be satisfied with my job?
- Am I doing a few things well, or am I overcommitted and operating in the flesh? How is my servant attitude?
- What things come easily and naturally for me? What am I really good at? What ability has God entrusted to me that could be a blessing to others (Rom 12:4-8; 1Cor 12-14; 1Pet 4:10-11)?
- 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?





From Valley of Vision, Puritan Prayers, pg. 122

“Father, grip my heart today.”

John 15:1-5

What Is "Real" Spiritual Growth?

In the last message Jesus gave to His disciples, He told them that the way to fruitfulness and joy—the "secret" to the Christian life—was to abide in Him. They wouldn't produce "abundant fruit" by reading books, intensifying their self-discipline, memorizing Scripture, or getting in accountability groups. Those things all have their place, but real fruit comes only from one place: abiding in Jesus



"Abiding in Jesus" may sound like spiritual mumbo jumbo to you. It always did to me. I assumed that when you were "abiding in Jesus" you'd walk around with an ethereal glow in your eye and inexplicably wake up at 4 a.m. strumming passion tunes on the golden harp you keep beside your bed. But the word *abide* is much more straightforward than that. The Greek word *meno* means literally "to make your home in." When we "make our home in" His love—feeling it, saturating ourselves with it, reflecting on it, standing in awe of it spiritual fruit begins to spring up naturally from us like roses on a rosebush.

Spiritual "fruit," you see, is produced in the same way physical "fruit" is. When a man and woman conceive physical "fruit" (i.e., a child), they are usually not thinking about the mechanics of making that child. Rather, they get caught up in a moment of loving intimacy with one another, and the *fruit* of that loving intimacy is a child.

In the same way, spiritual fruit isn't made by focusing on the commands of spiritual growth. You can't just grit your teeth and say, "I will have more loving feelings toward God! I will be more patient! I will have self-control!" I'll explain later the role for denial of the flesh and self-disciplines, but true spiritual *fruit* comes from getting swept up in intimate, loving encounters with Jesus Christ. His love is the soil in which all the fruits of the Spirit grow. When our roots abide *there*, then joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, and self-control grow naturally in our hearts.

When we "make our home in" His love, spiritual fruit begins to spring up naturally from us

So if you want to see spiritual fruit in your life, don't focus primarily on the fruits. Focus on Jesus' acceptance of you, given to you as a gift. Focusing on spiritual fruit will usually produce only frustration and despair, not fruitfulness.

Have you ever looked at your life and thought, "Why am I still so impatient? How could I really be saved and still have such a problem with self-control?" I certainly have. If anything, the more I've walked with Jesus the more aware I've become of my sinfulness. Jesus, however, did not tell me to abide in my fruitfulness. He told me to abide in Him--in His acceptance of me, given to me freely as a gift.

Abiding in Jesus means understanding that His acceptance of us is the same regardless of the amount of spiritual fruit we have produced. Ironically, it is only when we understand that His love is not conditioned on our spiritual

To see spiritual fruit
In your life, don't
Focus primarily on the
fruits. Focus on Jesus'
acceptance of you, given
to you as a gift.

fruitfulness that we gain the power to become truly fruitful. Only those who abide in Him produce much fruit. In other words, those people who get better are those who understand that God's approval of them is not dependent on their getting better.

So what I really want to help you do ... is abide in Jesus. The by-product of abiding in Jesus is that you will become more patient in your marriage; you will develop self-discipline; you will become generous. Abiding in Jesus will produce *all* of the fruits of the Spirit in you—but not by having you concentrate particularly on any of those things. You concentrate on Jesus. You rest in His love and acceptance, given to you not because of what you have earned, but because of what He has earned for you.

Excerpted from *Gospel*, by JD Greear, 2011. Pgs. 12-14

What would it look like for me to “make my home” in Christ’s love this week? What practices help me remain aware of Jesus’ presence and acceptance throughout the day? Where might God be inviting me to stop striving and start resting?

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

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Ephesians 1:7

“...the riches of his grace
which He lavished on us.”

Ephesians 2:7

“...the immeasurable riches of His grace
in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

Ephesians 3:8

“...His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”



Slowly read through this Puritan prayer. Allow your heart to be overwhelmed with the magnitude of God’s grace toward you. Read through it a couple times, slowing down and meditating on what stirs your heart.

PRIVILEGES

O Lord God,

Teach me to know that grace precedes,
accompanies, and follows my salvation,
that it sustains the redeemed soul,
that not one link of its chain can ever break.

From Calvary's cross wave upon wave of grace
reaches me,
deals with my sin,
washes me clean,
renews my heart,
strengthens my will,
draws out my affection,
kindles a flame in my soul,
rules throughout my inner man,
consecrates my every thought, word, work,
teaches me thy immeasurable love.

How great are my privileges in Christ Jesus!
 Without him I stand far off, a stranger, an outcast;
 in him I draw near and touch his kingly sceptre.
 Without him I dare not lift up my guilty eyes;
 in him I gaze upon my Father—God and Friend.
 Without him I hide my lips in trembling shame;
 in him I open my mouth in petition and praise.
 Without him all is wrath and consuming fire;
 in him is all love, and the repose of my soul.
 Without him is gaping hell below me, and eternal anguish;
 in him its gates are barred to me by his precious blood.
 Without him darkness spreads its horrors in front;
 in him an eternity of glory is my boundless horizon.
 Without him all within me is terror and dismay,
 in him every accusation is charmed into joy and peace.
 Without him all things external call for my condemnation;
 in him they minister to my comfort, and are to be enjoyed
 with thanksgiving.
 Praise be to thee for grace,
 and for the unspeakable gift of Jesus.

The Valley of Vision, Puritan Prayers and Devotions, p.284-285

What words or phrases gripped my heart this morning? Take a moment to thank God in prayer for the riches of His grace lavished on me.

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Zechariah 13:1; Isaiah 1:18; Hebrews 9:22

Today as you meet with God, we are encouraging you to do it through music. Let these truths wash over you and respond back to the Lord in prayer

Scan the QR code to listen to the song on YouTube.

There Is a Fountain (Full of Love) –
Shane & Shane Lyric Video



There Is a Fountain (Full of Love)

Shane & Shane

There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains

Lose all their guilty stains
Lose all their guilty stains
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains

The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day
And there may I, though vile as he
Wash all my sins away

Wash all my sins away
Wash all my sins away
And there may I, though vile as he
Wash all my sins away

Bridge:
Hallelujah
Fountain full of love for us
Poured out on us

Since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply
Redeeming love has been my theme
And shall be 'til I die

And shall be 'til I die
And shall be 'til I die
Redeeming love has been my theme
And shall be 'til I die

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 my next step with my pinky finger 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*

PSALM 46:10-11



**BE STILL, AND KNOW
THAT I AM GOD.**

**I WILL BE EXALTED
AMONG THE NATIONS,
I WILL BE EXALTED
IN THE EARTH!**

**THE LORD OF HOSTS IS WITH US;
THE GOD OF JACOB IS OUR FORTRESS.**

SELAH

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 Feb. 27th and Sunday Mar. 8th. 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 51- 61) 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 a Gospel rich portion of Scripture*** (20 mins)
- **Reflect on the truths of Scripture 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)**

* We suggest reading an entire book like Ephesians or Colossians. Or a section of teaching from Jesus like "The Sermon on the Mount" in Matthew 5-7 or "The Upper Room Discourse" in John 13-17. Or a portion of scripture that has been especially meaningful that will prepare your heart to commune with your Heavenly Father.

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 your scripture in one sitting (20-30 mins)

Read and/or listen to your chosen scripture 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 51-61). **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 Your chosen scripture.**

Reflect on the truths of your chosen scripture as they intersect with my life (90-120 mins)

Go back to your underlines, highlights or notes from your reading through your chosen scripture. 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 spring (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 your chosen scripture 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 your next “Prayer, Care, Share” step with your pinky finger 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 your next “Prayer, Care, Share” step with your pinky finger person.

HOW to Write an Action Point?

When formulating action points, try to make them SMART*

SMART Action Points

Specific – not fuzzy

Measurable – you know when you are done

Attainable – possible to do

Relevant - meaningful

Time Limited – can show progress between meetings

RECORDING Action Points

In The Grip Guide

The last journaling page in Week 5 (pgs 70-71) 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 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!

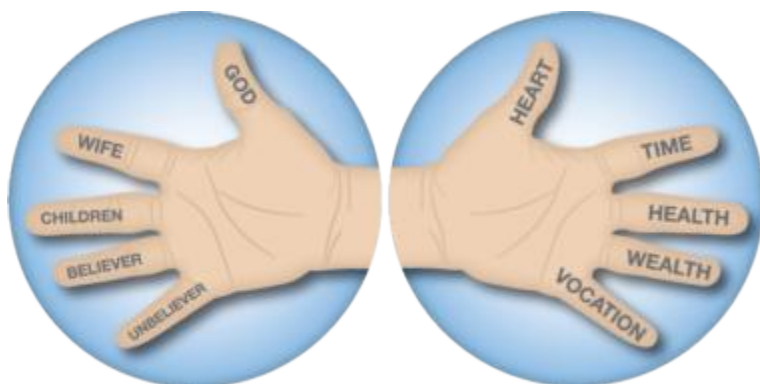
Writing down some action points and sharing them with a brother is important. But the point is to DO them! The law of diminishing intent says **the longer you wait to take action, the less likely you will ever take the action.** Therefore, once God puts an action point on your heart, start moving.

As you begin your retreat, reflect back on the questions you circled during week 3 and week 4 (p. 51-61) 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



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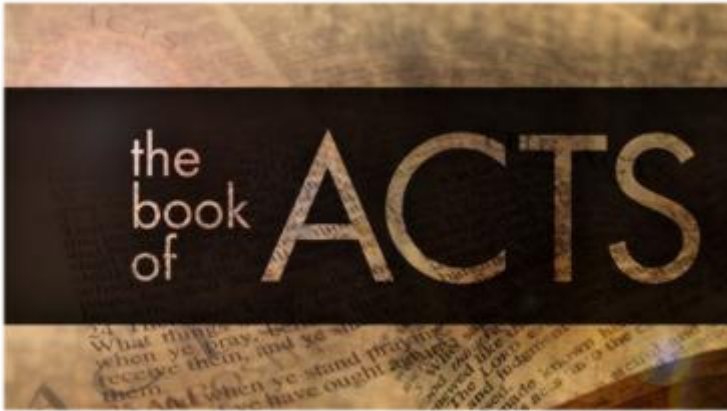
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Section 3



Acts 4:12 (NASB95)

And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.

Acts

Author: Luke is believed to be the author of Acts even though he isn't specifically named. Both Luke's Gospel and the book of Acts are addressed to Theophilus (Luke 1:3, Acts 1:1) so it's logical to conclude that he authored both of these letters. Luke was Paul's close friend, traveling companion, and personal physician.

Date: Acts was most likely written around A.D. 62. The book ends abruptly with Paul awaiting trial before Caesar and doesn't mention anything about Paul's ministry after that trial, his second imprisonment, or his death. Luke's silence about significant events like the martyrdom of James (Jesus's brother and head of the Jerusalem church) in A.D. 62, the persecution under Nero in A.D. 64, and the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 suggests he wrote Acts before those events transpired.

Audience: Like his Gospel, Acts was a letter to Luke's friend Theophilus. Luke's address of him as "most excellent Theophilus" (Luke 1:3) suggests he was a Roman official of some importance. Theophilus was likely a Christian or at least a seeker who was carefully studying the Christian faith. Luke wrote to give Theophilus (and others who would read his work) a continued record of what Jesus accomplished through the Holy Spirit filled Apostles and the early church.

Purpose: The primary purpose of Acts was to give an account of the work of the Holy Spirit as He spread the gospel to "the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8) that is, to Rome, which represented the end of the earth as the center of world power. The book could be more specifically titled "The Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles," since it was the Spirit's directing, controlling, and empowering ministry that moved the gospel forward and strengthened the church causing it to grow in numbers, spiritual power, and influence.

In a very real sense, the faithful witness of these first-generation Christ followers has led to the Gospel eventually coming to YOU. As you work your way through this Bible book, invite the Holy Spirit to similarly use you in your generation!

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 Acts by scanning the QR code.



“Father, grip my heart today.”

Acts 1

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.



Jesus called the Apostles to be patient in the time leading up to them receiving power from the Holy Spirit. (:4-5). Where is God telling me to be patient? When faced with challenging questions, am I trusting that God has the answers and will reveal them in His perfect timing (Is 60:22b)? We are called to be witnesses for Jesus Christ (:8). Am I obedient to this command? If not, what is preventing me from doing so?

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

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Acts 2

What role does the Holy Spirit play in the life of a believer? Peter is the man who denied Jesus three times, however, now he preaches boldly about Christ (:14). What caused the change in Peter? Am I actively seeking and embracing the spiritual authority of my leaders? (:42) Do I belong to a Christian community where I actively share both spiritual and material things (:42-47)? When have I experienced the enabling power of the Spirit?



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

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Acts 3

Peter was able to give the lame beggar healing and transformative power in the name of Jesus because he himself had received them through faith in Jesus (:6). Who has God placed in my life that



needs to hear about the amazing grace that I've received in Christ and how can I intentionally share this with them? What does Peter say is the result of repentance (:19-20, 26)? Am I experiencing times of refreshing in the presence of the Lord? If not, where in my life do I need to repent and turn back to God so I may experience His refreshing? Do I constantly give Christ the credit He deserves for the blessings and accomplishments in my life?

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

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Acts 4:1-31

Where is the power and boldness that the Apostles exhibit coming from (:8, 10, 13, 19-20, 29-31?) Notice how the Apostles faced trying circumstances (:1-3), but instead of praying for deliverance from the situation they prayed for boldness in the midst of it (:29-31). How do I handle trying circumstances in my life? Am I praying for deliverance or boldness?



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

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Acts 4:32-5:11

What qualities characterized the community of early believers (:32-34)? What was the core of Ananias and Sapphires sin (:3-4, 9)? What does this incident teach me about God? Is there any dishonesty or lies in my heart? Am I holding back anything from God? Where does the fear of the Lord fit into my Christian walk?



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

Week 7

Date: _____

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Acts 5:12 – 42

What continues to motivate the apostles on their mission (:29)? In what ways am I actively serving Jesus in my daily life that would inspire others to bring their struggles to me for help (:14-15)?

Notice the response of the apostles to the opposition they faced (:41). What would I change about how I tend to respond to difficult times in my Christian life?



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

Week 7

Date: _____

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Acts 6

What do the apostles prioritize (:4,7)?

What priority does God’s word, prayer, and making disciples have in my life?

What evidence do I see of the Holy Spirit at work in and through Stephen? (:8, 10, 15) Notice that this “movement”

continues to grow (:1, 7) by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. How does that encourage me to follow Jesus’s mission?



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

Week 7

Date: _____

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Acts 7

Since the Sanhedrin knew their history every bit as much as Stephen, how do I account for their radically different response to Jesus? What is needed in a person's life besides knowledge to really understand Jesus? Stephen's heart was genuinely concerned for the people's salvation (:60). Do I have a heart like the Father's for those who are lost? Note that our English word 'Martyr' comes from the Greek word for 'witness' (martus).



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

Week 7

Date: _____

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Acts 8

How was God using the persecution of the believers to further the growth of the gospel (:1, 4)? How can I see challenges in my life as opportunities for growth?

Simon the Magician wanted the power of God in his life to further advance his personal agenda but was denied by the Apostles (:18-22). Why do I want the power of God in my life? Who is directing Philip as he works to spread the gospel (:26, 29, 39)? To where, or to whom, may the Holy Spirit be directing me during this season of my life?



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

Week 7

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 as I've watched the Church explode through the faithful and courageous witness of the early believers filled with the Spirit. In my 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 Acts? 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

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Acts 9:1-31

Consider the dramatic change in Saul’s life after Jesus got his attention and called his name (:20-22). How has Jesus gotten my attention, or how is he trying to get my attention? Have I embraced change or resisted it? From the moment Saul begins to follow Jesus, he encounters suffering. How has following Jesus cost me? What evidence is there that I have prioritized my faith over comfort? Who has Jesus put in my path in order for them to hear the good news from me?



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

My Story: Before...When...Since

Yesterday's GRIP reading in Acts 9 records the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. We clearly see what he was like **BEFORE**, what happened **WHEN** He met Jesus, and the change in his life **SINCE**.



BEFORE - "breathing threats and murder against the disciples" 9:1

WHEN - "The Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road..." 9:17-18

SINCE - "...speaking out boldly in the name of the Lord." 9:28

Later in Acts, and then in some of his epistles, you'll see Paul recount his story in this format: "Before... When... Since" (Acts 11:1-21; 25:1-23; Phil 3:1-14; 1Tim 1:12-16).

At some point it will be fitting to share with your pinky friend how **you** came into a personal relationship with Christ and how He drew you to Himself (John 6:44)? Thinking through how you may share your testimony is a genuine expression of care for your friend! To help you learn how to confidently share your conversion story, (or to share a more recent shift toward a fuller embrace of Christ), we suggest you follow the simple pattern of

"Before... When... Since..."

For today's journaling time, use the space below to bullet the facts of your story. We've included some questions to get your juices flowing.

Describe my life BEFORE I came to Christ.

(What did I trust in? What/who held first place in my heart? What was my lifestyle? How was my life was going? What were my thoughts about God? What was my level of spiritual understanding?)

Describe WHEN I surrendered my life to God.

(How did God get my attention? What realizations did I come to? Did it feel like a process or an event? Who did God use to help me? What did repenting look like for me? How did I express my faith in Jesus? In what way was I aware of the Holy Spirit working?)

Describe specific changes in my life SINCE trusting Christ.

(What immediate or gradual changes did I experience? How did I grow in my assurance of salvation? Who helped me along my journey? When has my faith been tested?)



Spend some moments thanking God for his hand on your life and how he has been faithful to you.



Now that you've thought through your story, why not share it first with your GRIP partner and your family?

Week 8

Date: _____

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Acts 9:32-10:23

Who heals the paralyzed man (:34)? What is the result of his healing (:35)? What does Peter do to raise the widow from the dead (:40)? How is Peter modeling the pattern of: “Be with Jesus, Become like Him, Do as Jesus did” (Acts 4:13; Mark 5:36-41)? How reliant on prayer am I when I am faced with what seems like impossible tasks? How is it clear that the Acts of the Apostles are really God led (:10:3-7; 10-20)?



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

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Acts 10:24-48

Cornelius gathered his family and friends to hear about God before he was even fully converted. (:24-27) Who am I inviting to join me in my own seeking of God? What truth about God’s character compels Peter to share the gospel with the Gentiles (:34-35)? How should this affect my witnessing? Was it Peter’s great message or something else that caused the Gentiles to believe in Jesus (:44)? “Then they asked him to remain for some days” (:48). Am I allowing unbelievers access to my life in order to share Jesus with them?



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

Week 8

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



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

We have also included a song to help align your heart with the beauty of Christ’s sacrifice for you, once again.

***Golgotha** – Brandon Lake*

Upon a hill they call Golgotha
There grew a rose among the weeds
A beauty unembraced, perfection out of place
Our God, the King, among the thieves

It feels like poetry embodied
The carpenter upon the tree
He died against the grain,
just like He lived each day
Became the message that He preached

Chorus:

Oh, hallelujah with hands lifted high
What else would I do but give You my heart
My hallelujah for all that You’ve done
The least I could do is give You my heart
My hallelujah

We really should have seen it coming
He even said how many days
An earthquake in the cave
That stone was rolled away
Who puts a God inside a grave?
You can’t keep God inside a grave

Chorus

***Scan the QR code to listen to
the song on YouTube.***

Brandon Lake - Golgotha
(Lyric Video)



Bridge:

I will praise the One
who left His mark on Calvary
I will praise the One
who left the grave but kept those keys
He is alive, He is alive,
He forevermore will be
Now the wonder working power
is alive in me

Someday in skies above Golgotha
On clouds like stallions He’ll descend
The trumpets start to blaze,
the Saints erupt in praise
The King is coming back again,
Our King is coming back again

Chorus

GRIP Gathering Preparation



Word Highlights – Over the last 3 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)?

A morning prayer:

*My life is in Your hands, God.
Use me to point someone toward You
today. I promise to cooperate in any
way I can. If you want me to say a
word for You today, I'll do that.
If You want me to keep quiet but
demonstrate love and servanthood, by
Your Spirit's power I will.
I'm fully available to you today,
so guide me by your Spirit.*

Section 4



Acts 18:9-10 (NASB95)

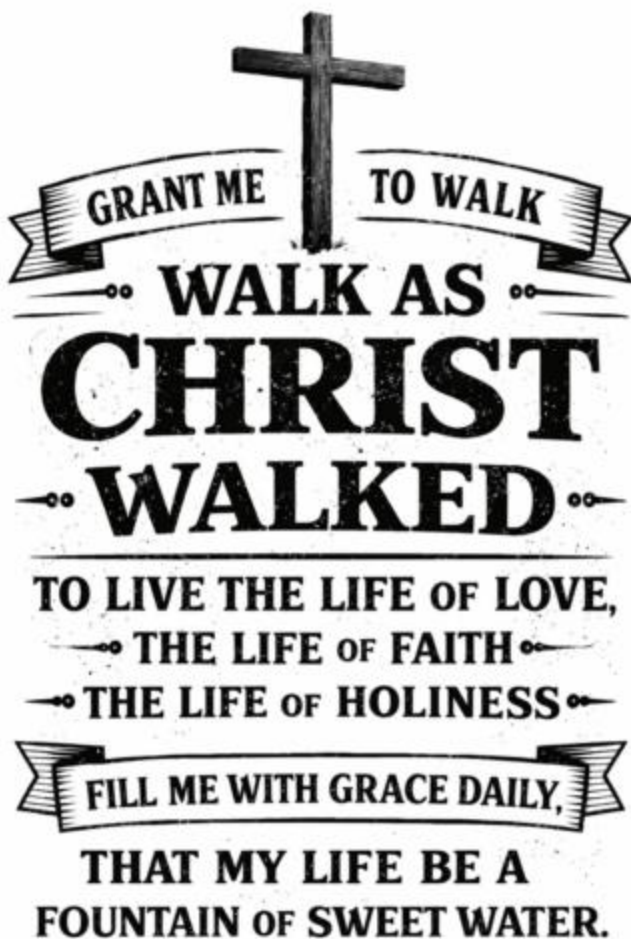
9 And the Lord said to Paul in the night by a vision, “Do not be afraid *any longer*, but go on speaking and do not be silent;

10 for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city.

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 Acts by scanning the QR code.



Acts: Part 2



From Valley of Vision, Puritan Prayers, pg. 169

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Acts 11

How does Peter handle the opposition he faced? What does he do (:2-4)? How do I respond when others judge me or oppose me? How does the circumcision party respond to Peter’s patient explanation of what has happened (:18)? Who is identified, yet again, as the one who leads men to repentance (:15-18)? How does this reality motivate my prayers? Am I praying with confidence knowing that God is fully capable of transforming my pinky finger guy?



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

“Father, grip my heart today.”

James 2:14-26

Relationship between Faith and Works

Throughout our journey through Acts, we will occasionally pause to read passages from letters written during the Acts timeline. The earliest of the New Testament letters (~AD 45) was written by James, the prominent church leader in Jerusalem and the half-brother of Jesus. His main emphasis throughout the letter is on godly behavior.



What is the essence of James' argument in today's passage? What kind of faith does James condemn in the early church (:14, 17, 20, 26)? What is the difference between "faith" as James uses it here and the way "faith" is normally defined in the New Testament? How does James see the relationship between faith and works (:18, 21)? What outward evidence is there to others of my claim to inner faith?

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

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Acts 12

How does the church respond to the unjust killings and persecution faced by the Apostles (:5)? In what ways can I effectively pray for Christ's persecuted church today? Imagine how Peter's experience with the angel emboldened him and the others as they continued to on mission for Christ. How might divine interventions inspire modern believers to persevere in their faith and mission despite challenges? Why did God strike down Herod? (:23) How can I use my position of authority and leadership to give glory to God?



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

Preparing My Heart for Easter

From *Fifty Reasons why Jesus came to Die* by John Piper (pgs. 38-39)

Why Jesus Came to Die:

TO PROVIDE THE BASIS FOR OUR JUSTIFICATION



We have now been justified by his blood.

Romans 5:9

*[We] are justified by his grace as a gift,
through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*

Romans 3:24

*We hold that one is justified by faith
apart from works of the law.*

Romans 3:28

Being justified before God and being forgiven by God are not identical. To be justified in a courtroom is not the same as being forgiven. Being forgiven implies that I am guilty and my crime is not counted. Being justified implies that I have been tried and found innocent. My claim is just. I am vindicated. The judge says, "Not guilty."

Justifying is a legal act. It means declaring someone to be just. It is a verdict. The verdict of justification does not make a person just. It declares a person just. It is based on someone actually being just. We can see this most clearly when the Bible tells us that, in response to Jesus' teaching, the people "justified" God (Luke 7:29). This does not mean they made God just (since he already was). It means they declared God to be just.

The moral change we undergo when we trust Christ is not justification. The Bible usually calls that sanctification-the process of becoming good. Justification is not that process. It is

not a process at all. It is a declaration that happens in a moment. A verdict: Just! Righteous!

The ordinary way to be justified in a human court is to keep the law. In that case the jury and the judge simply declare what is true of you: You kept the law. They justify you. But in the courtroom of God, we have not kept the law. Therefore, justification, on ordinary terms, is hopeless. The Bible even says, "He who justifies the wicked [is] an abomination to the LORD" (Proverbs 17:15). And yet, amazingly, because of Christ, it also says God "justifies the ungodly" who trust in his grace (Romans 4:5). God does what looks abominable.

Why is it not abominable? Or, as the Bible puts it, how can God "be just and the justifier of the one who [simply!] has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26)? It is not abominable for God to justify the ungodly who trust him, for two reasons. One is that Christ shed his blood to cancel the guilt of our crime. So it says, "We have now been justified by his blood" (Romans 5:9). But that is only the removal of guilt. That does not declare us righteous. Canceling our failures to keep the law is not the same as declaring us to be a law-keeper. When a teacher cancels from the record an exam that got an F, it's not the same as declaring it an A. If the bank were to forgive me the debts on my account, that would not be the same as declaring me rich. So also, canceling our sins is not the same as declaring us righteous. The cancellation must happen. That is essential to justification. But there is more. There is another reason why it is not abominable for God to justify the ungodly by faith. For that we turn to the next chapter.

Week 9

Date: _____

Preparing My Heart for Easter

From Fifty Reasons why Jesus came to Die by John Piper (pgs. 40-41)

Why Jesus Came to Die:

TO COMPLETE THE OBEDIENCE THAT BECOMES OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS



*Being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient
to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

Philippians 2:8

*For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners,
so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.*

Romans 5:19

*For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin,
so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

2 Corinthians 5:21

*...not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law,
but that which comes through faith in Christ.*

Philippians 3:9

Justification is not merely the cancellation of my unrighteousness. It is also the imputation of Christ's righteousness to me. I do not have a righteousness that commends me to God. My claim before God is this: "not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ" (Philippians 3:9).

This is Christ's righteousness. It is imputed to me. That means Christ fulfilled all righteousness perfectly; and then that righteousness was reckoned to be mine, when I trusted in him. I was counted righteous. God looked on Christ's perfect righteousness, and he declared me to be righteous with the Righteousness of Christ.

So there are two reasons why it is not abominable for God to justify the ungodly (Romans 4:5). First, *the death of Christ paid the debt of our unrighteousness* (see the previous chapter).

Second, *the obedience of Christ provided the righteousness we needed to be justified in God's court*. The demands of God for entrance into eternal life are not merely that our unrighteousness be canceled, but that our perfect righteousness be established.

The suffering and death of Christ are the basis of both. His suffering is the suffering that our unrighteousness deserved. "He was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5). But his suffering and death were also the climax and completion of the obedience that became the basis of our justification. He was "obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:8). His death was the pinnacle of his obedience. This is what the Bible refers to when it says, "By the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous" (Romans 5:19).

Therefore, Christ's death became the basis of our pardon and our perfection. "For our sake [God] made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21). What does it mean that God made the sinless Christ to be sin? It means our sin was imputed to him, and thus he became our pardon. And what does it mean that we (who are sinners) become the righteousness of God in Christ? It means, similarly, that Christ's righteousness is imputed to us, and thus he became our perfection.

May Christ be honored for his whole achievement in suffering and dying! Both the work of pardoning our sin, and the work of providing our righteousness. Let us admire him and treasure him and trust him for this great achievement.

Week 10

Date: _____

“Father, grip my heart today.”**Acts 13**

Who is directing the apostles on their mission (:2-4)? How are the apostles positioning themselves to be led by the Spirit (:2)? Am I daily putting myself in a position to hear from God? The apostles wasted no time obeying God after they heard from Him (:4). How quickly do I respond to God's leading in my life? What is the core message of Paul's sermon in verses 16-41? What role does scripture play in Paul's message? How can I emulate Paul in sharing the joy of Christ with my pinky finger guy?



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

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Acts 14

Am I communicating my faith in a way that genuinely resonates with others (:1)? How do the apostles respond to the continued opposition and persecution on their missionary journey (:6-7, 21, 24-26)? How do I view the “roadblocks” I face in life? Do I view them as obstacles or opportunities for growth? How does Paul encourage and care for the new believers (:21-23)? How can I encourage and strengthen my grip partner today?



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

Week 10

Date: _____

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Galatians 2:11- 3:5

Motivation That Matches the Gospel

The letter to the Galatians is the earliest of Paul's letters we have in the Bible. It was most likely written from Antioch in AD 49 after Paul's first missionary journey and before the Jerusalem council (Acts 15). The letter was a response to some teaching in the Galatian church by Jewish Christians promoting merit-salvation through obedience to the Jewish Law. Paul emphatically sets forth the doctrine of justification by faith plus nothing.



Paul confronted Peter for acting out of line with the Gospel of grace (:11-14). Put yourself in Peter's sandals. When I am rebuked by a brother who loves me, is my response self-protective or one of humbly seeking to understand and repent as appropriate. For me, is "saved by grace through faith" (Eph 2:8-9) simply a propositional truth I assent to but go on living in the flesh? In my life, does my perception of my standing with God tend to 'start by faith, but finish by works'? According to Paul, what role do my works and actions play in my salvation and justification (:16)? On whose action does justification depend? Have I experienced the sensation of Christ living His life in me (2:20)?

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

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Acts 15:1-35

What is causing disunity among the believers (:1,9)? Why is this issue so significant and controversial (:10-11)? What can I learn from this passage about resolving disputes among believers? Where do I tend to drift into legalism by demanding practices (of myself and others) not required by God?



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

Week 10

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, which included Gentiles coming to Christ, Paul's first missionary journey, and Easter reflections. 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 Acts? 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

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Acts 15:36-16:40

Notice the very specific directing of the Holy Spirit in verses 6-10 and the confirmation among the brothers. Am I continually aligning myself to God's direction and checking in with my brothers as I am on mission for Him? What evidence do I see that God is opening my pinky friend's heart toward Him (:16)? How did Paul's and Silas' behavior influence the jailor's conversion (:27-32)? Am I living in a way that reflects the calling I've received? (Ephesians 4:1)



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

Week 11

Date: _____

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Acts 17:1-15

How do the responses of the Thessalonian Jews (:5) differ from those of the Berean Jews (:11-12)? What lessons can I learn from these differences? How can I apply these lessons when sharing Jesus with others?



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

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Acts 17:16-34

Notice how Paul “observes” the spiritual state of Athens (:16,22). What am I observing in my pinky friend’s life right now? Considering the final judgment day, what does Paul plead with the people of Athens to do (:30-31)? What 3 responses does Paul receive from his audience (:32-34)? How is American culture similar to this Athenian culture? (:16)



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

*See bonus content on following page →

Observe and Build Bridges

Paul, led by the Spirit, kept his eyes and ears open. He observed the people around him and then made a personal connection to what he observed. Here's what this might sound like for you.

"Jim, you've mentioned on several occasions over these past few weeks that you are having a tough time in the area of _____ (priorities or parenting or marriage or stress or finances, etc.). Would you mind if I shared with you what God has taught me about this area and how He helped me through some tough times of failure?"

Can you see how the speaker

- a) makes the connection to his friend's life because he had been closely listening [*you've mentioned on several occasions over these past few weeks that you are having a tough time with priorities*],
- b) indicates that God has taught him something [*what God has taught me*],
- c) shares from weakness [*how He helped me through some tough times of failure*], and
- d) asks permission [*would you mind if I shared with you*]?

Here are some other examples:

- "Steve, I HEAR that you have four little kids and are in a stressful parenting season. Mind if I tell you how my Father, God, helped me to hang in there as a dad when my kids were young?"
- "Hank, I CAN SEE that, like me, you are often very stressed out about politics and the direction of our country. Mind if I tell you how Christ has given me peace and hope in the midst of all the division, hate and turmoil?"
- "Ernie, I OBSERVE that you are interested in having a great marriage with Marie. I can tell by all the questions you've been asking me about my marriage. I'd love to share with you how God has been teaching me lately about marriage."
- "Mike, I OBSERVE that your recent heart issue has been really attention getting. Have you considered that it's God who is getting your attention? What do you think He wants you to understand?"

What bridge can I build between what I observe in my pinky friend's life and what God has taught me?

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Acts 18:1-22

What different responses to the Gospel do I see in this passage (:6, 8, 12,13)?

Although God knows when and how people will respond, to us Gospel responsiveness remains a mystery (Mark 4:26-29). How does Jesus encourage and strengthen Paul to remain steadfast on this gospel mission (:9-10)? How does this motivate me to stay faithful to the prayer, care, share mindset?



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

Week 11

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



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?**

GRIP Gathering Preparation



Word Highlights – Over the last 3 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?

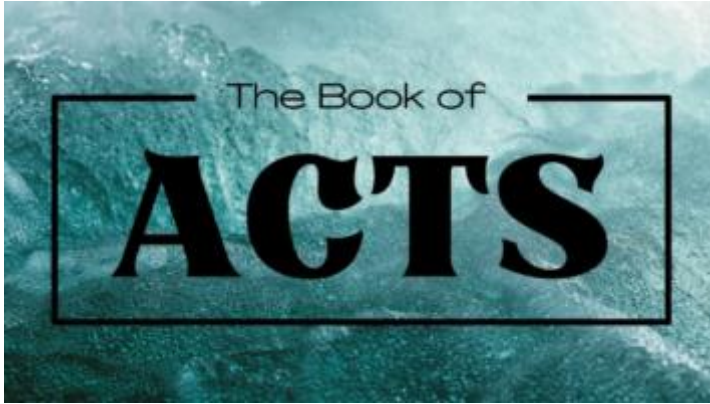


Action Point Progress – Over these past weeks I followed through on the following actions which God put on my heart to prioritize.



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



Acts 22:15 (NASB95)

For you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard.

Week 12

Date: _____

“Father, may Your heart for the one be mine”**1Thessalonians 2****Relational Gospel Ministry**

Near the end of his second missionary journey, while in Corinth, Paul pens this letter in response to Timothy’s good report following a checkup visit to the young Thessalonian church. This is a letter from a relieved and grateful church planter to his healthy and growing flock. His affection for these Gentile believers is clear.



Paul references his suffering and mistreatment (2:2), which I read about in Acts 16:22-17:10. What characteristics do Paul and his team show as they evangelized and discipled these folks (2:5-11)? How do these qualities apply to my commitment to the spiritual success of my GRIP partner? What is the goal of Paul’s discipleship (2:12; see also Eph 4:1; Phil 1:27; Col 1:10)? Is this my discipleship goal? What further insight do I gain about the Thessalonians response to the Gospel call (2:13-14)? What is my next prayer, care, share step with my pinky person?

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

Week 12

Date: _____

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Acts 18:23 – 19:41

What seems to be Paul's main purpose on this missionary journey (18:23)? Specifically, how can I strengthen my grip partner today? Apollos was mighty in the scriptures and eloquent, but was also teachable (18:24-28). What about me? Good old-fashioned book burning (:18-20)? What things have I been led to forsake because of my growing devotion to Christ and His truth? Are there any culturally acceptable sins that still remain in my life?



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

Week 12

Date: _____

“Father, grip my heart today.”**Acts 20**

Notice the fellowship of men Paul had with him on this mission (:4-5). Are the men that I fellowship with helping me stay on mission for Christ? How can I balance my personal needs with calls to serve my community (:19)? What practical things can I do to show care and support for those in my community (:35)? What continues to motivate Paul (:24)? What things are on Paul's heart as he speaks with these disciples for the last time (:18-35)?



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

Week 12

Date: _____

“Father, may Your heart for the one be mine”**2Corinthians 5**

Ambassadors for Christ

The gospel was first preached in Corinth on Paul's second missionary journey around AD 50. After a vision from the Lord, Paul stayed 18 fruitful months in Corinth (Acts 18:11). After he left, the church stumbled through many growing pains. Paul wrote at least two letters to this church in Corinth (prior to the letter we know as 2Corinthians) pleading with them to repent of sin. When Paul heard from Titus that the church was flourishing, Paul penned 2Corinthians to express his joy that they were again allowing God to grip their hearts. He wrote it midway through his second missionary journey from Macedonia in AD 56.



What fact about death encourages me here (:8)? In what ways am I walking by faith and not by sight (:7)? What motivations for evangelism do I see in this passage (:9; 10-11; 14-15; 18-19)? What old things have passed away from me (:17)? Be specific. How does my life reflect God's radical new perspective? How well am I fulfilling God's role for me as Christ's ambassador (:20)? What is my next prayer, care, share step with my pinky person?

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

Week 12

Date: _____

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Acts 21:1-26

What action does Paul take when he arrives at Tyre (:4)? Do I make it a point to seek out other believers in my neighborhood, workplace, or during my personal travel? Do I try to avoid suffering for Jesus, or embrace it (:12-14)? Paul is willing to make compromises for the sake of the unity of the believers (:23-24). Am I?



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

Week 13

Date: _____

“Father, grip my heart today.”**Acts 21:27 – 22:29**

Notice Paul’s progression in telling his testimony. He, once again, shows unhindered boldness to speak about the good news of Jesus (:37-40). Am I willing to be bold and speak about Jesus even when I know I’m in the minority? The crowd’s reaction in verse 22 reflects their deep-seated views about Gentiles and their belief in Jewish superiority. Do I hold on to feelings of superiority towards others?



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

Week 13

Date: _____

“Father, grip my heart today.”**Acts 22:30 – 23:35**

How does God encourage Paul during this stressful and probably frightening season of his life (:11)? Reflect on moments when God has encouraged me in times of need. How have these moments shaped and strengthened my faith? God rescued Paul from the attempted murder plot on his life (:22-23, 31). How does this incident in Paul’s life provide me courage and confidence during turmoil and unrest in my own life?



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

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Acts 24

How does Paul respond to the false accusations that he incited riots and profaned the temple (:13-16)? Even amid being falsely accused Paul still finds ways to speak about the hope he has in God (:14-15). And while imprisoned Paul remains mindful of opportunities to share the gospel (:24-25).



What priority do I put on sharing the gospel in my day-to-day life? Am I mindful of opportunities throughout my day to share the hope I have in Christ? Or do I allow my circumstances to dictate my priorities?

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

Week 13

Date: _____

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Acts 25

Imagine how Paul is feeling after sitting in prison for over 2 years (Acts 24:27). Unable to go on missionary journeys, unable to visit the churches he helped establish. And yet, when given the opportunity, he was quick to share the glorious gospel! How can I explain Paul's readiness? How is God's will in Paul's life being worked out during this time (:12)? How can I apply Paul's example of hope and perseverance in my life when faced with bleak circumstances?



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

Week 13

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.*



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

I Have No Other Plan

“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples...I am with you always...”

Matt 28:18, 20

Shhhh! It's a holy moment. Envision the dramatic, physical ascension of Jesus.¹ Note the millions of angels giving Him a glorious welcome in heaven. After a joyous celebration, they gather around to ask questions about His birth, life, death and resurrection. They crowd around to hear just how He had so faithfully



accomplished all that the Father had given Him to do. They wait with anticipation for the details of His strategic plan for delivering His salvation offer to the world. Imagine the conversation.

“You are back here so soon! Merely 33 years of age and only three in public ministry! How will the entire world throughout the generations know about the salvation You offer?” they pressed.

“I have trained My men and women,” came the simple answer.

“To evangelize the whole world?” they questioned with utter astonishment.

“Yes, indeed. Every man, woman and child in every nation, from every city, every tribe, every culture and every language.”

“How many have You trained for such a mammoth task?”

“A handful,” responded the Lord.

“A handful?” they gasped. “But what if they fail?”

“If they fail, I have made no other plans.”

“But isn’t that a grave risk to take?” they probed. By now the entire rank of angelic host was fascinated with Jesus’ simple, yet audacious plan.

“No. Through Me they have experienced the Father’s compassion and grace. And in response to My love they will make My very last command of making disciples their very first concern. And in the power of the Holy Spirit they will announce My Father’s gracious offer of forgiveness everywhere they go and to everyone they meet.” Jesus glanced past the sea of angels and gave the Father a wink.

“Well, what kind of men did you choose? Are they the sharp, dynamic, articulate types with charismatic leadership and exuberant personalities that can draw in the crowds?” the angels inquired.

“Let’s see,” Jesus interrupted. *“I chose a few smelly, uneducated fishermen, a couple of leather-skinned shepherds, a greedy tax collector, a political zealot, some disillusioned religious folks, an old, widowed grandmother, several prostitutes, a prisoner, a doctor, a business-woman, a tent maker and some others.”*

“But Lord, how can You entrust the greatest enterprise of history to such as these? The risk is too great. Surely they will not succeed.”

Seeing that the angels had run out of questions, Jesus replied, *“It is not a risk because they will not fail. I have made no other plans to spread the Good News of My redemption and offer of eternal life with the Father. I have trained My men and women. And they will NOT fail!”*

And they didn’t! A tiny handful of the most unlikely characters, enriched with the dynamic of the living Lord through the presence of the Holy Spirit, did not fail. Witness the church throughout history and its growth in the world today. We would not be here if they had failed.

As from the beginning, the Lord remains committed to just one simple plan. He wants to use **EACH ONE** of you to **REACH ONE** of your family members or friends with the truth of His Gospel. And if you step forward in faith in response to His love, **you will not fail either!**²

Story adapted from *Where Was The Church When The Youth Exploded* by Stuart Briscoe. Zondervan, 1972. p. 96

How does it make me feel that God is choosing me to bring others to Him? Have I accepted this calling on my life? Take some time to pray for my pinky finger relationships.

Week 14

Date: _____

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Acts 26

What new information do I learn about Paul's conversion in this passage (:16-20)? How do Festus and Agrippa respond to Paul's message? How have others responded to my story of life changing hope in Christ? How responsive have I been to God's call on my life to make disciples (:16-18)?



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

Week 14

Date: _____

“Father, grip my heart today.”

Acts 27

Notice the difference in the reactions of Paul compared to the others on the ship. What do their reactions say about them? How would I characterize my reactions and choices in the midst of extremely trying circumstance? Are they based in fear or faith? How do verses 22-25 encourage me, especially whenever I find myself in the midst of a difficult circumstance (Job 42:2)?



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

Week 14

Date: _____

“Father, grip my heart today.”**Acts 28**

Notice how Paul is continually looking for ways to serve others and share the love of God, even as a prisoner on the island of Malta (:3, 8-9). Do I look for different service opportunities throughout my day? Do I view these seemingly insignificant opportunities as a way to share the love of God? How does Paul's arrival in Rome demonstrate God's faithfulness (Acts 23:11; 28:14-16)? How have I seen God's faithfulness in my own life over this past season of GRIP? What difficult circumstances, if any, has God walked me through this season (just as He has promised)?



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

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. 34). 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?)

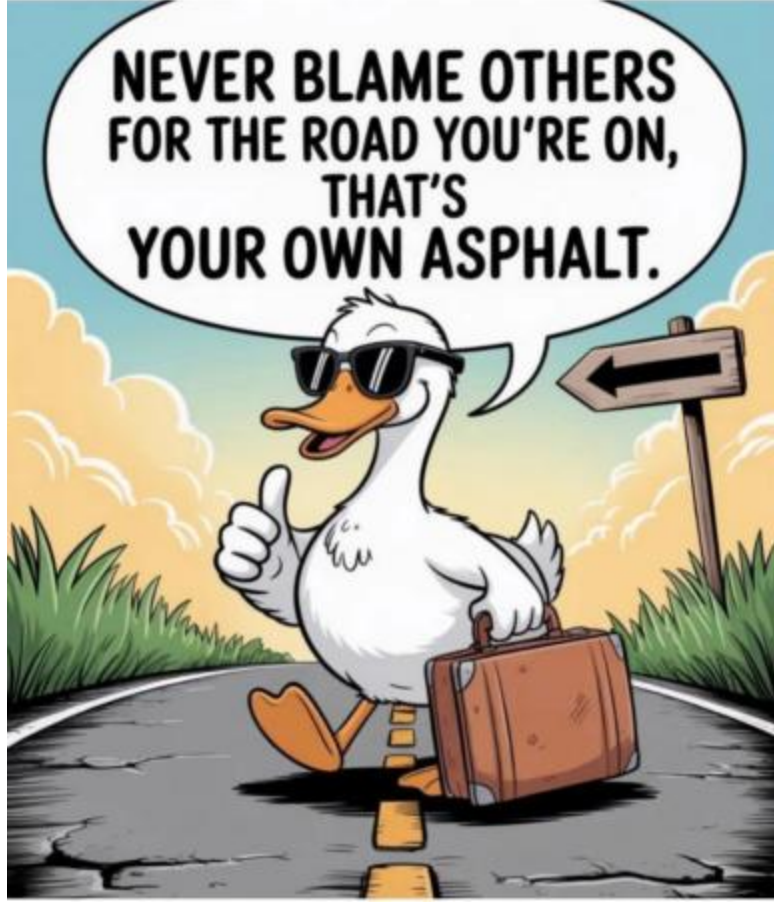
What brother(s) will I walk this spiritual journey with over the next couple of months?

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





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Key Relationships



Key Resources