



foundations

pursuing Christ through discipleship



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*for no one can lay a foundation
other than that which is laid,
which is Jesus Christ.*

1 corinthians 3:11



loving him
& loving his.

foundations: pursuing Christ through discipleship

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why discipleship?

the story of God is the story of a king saving his people and building his eternal kingdom—a kingdom that is made up of people from every tribe, tongue, and nation. his is an ever-expanding kingdom, and it includes us as **disciples of Jesus**.

before Jesus returned to heaven after his resurrection, he commanded his disciples to go and make disciples who would then make disciples (matthew 28:19-20). you are reading these words as a result of their obedience and the obedience of generations of men and women after them.

Jesus' command to make disciples applies just as much to us today as it did to his original followers. **he desires disciples, not merely converts**. he wants us to be followers and worshippers of him, not simply spectators and fans.

this is the essence of discipleship: **follow me as together we follow Christ.**

as you use this resource, do not let this be merely a cognitive exercise. discipleship is not simply knowing more about God, but rather it is **knowing God intimately** and **daily surrendering your life to his lordship**.

read slowly. ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you more and more of who God is and his steadfast love for you specifically. pray that your heart and mind would be moved to worship as you meet with God in his word.

in order to love God we must know him. as our knowledge of him grows, we are to make him known. as members of the body of Christ, we get to spur one another on towards Christ-likeness through discipleship.

this is the essence of discipleship: follow me as together we follow Christ. the commandment hasn't changed—we are to be disciplined to make disciples who make disciples. his kingdom is made up of people who know him, love him, and follow him. **if you belong to him, you are a part of this kingdom**.

so then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,
built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone.

ephesians 2:19-20

don't skip this!

foundations was created to be a resource for you to use as you walk through your discipling relationships. it in no way replaces scripture as the authority on any topic or truth, but rather it is to be supplemental in your growing understanding of God and his word. the purpose of this tool is to assist in laying a solid biblical foundation as well as equip believers to study the bible and disciple others to do the same.

a few notes as you begin:

- **pray!**

it is the Holy Spirit who guides us into all truth (john 16:13), so anytime we seek to read or study scripture, we need to first **pray that the Holy Spirit would illuminate our minds** to understand the truths we will read and **soften our hearts** to let scripture transform us.

- **slow down!**

resist the temptation to treat any of this as an item on a checklist or see this as homework. do not feel the pressure to finish any portion in a single sitting or even to look up every scripture reference listed.

the end goal of this resource is not that you would finish any of it in a specific timeframe, but that you would **grow to know God and worship him more**.

- **be free!**

each section of *foundations* includes an introduction and four parts to provide a structure for getting together regularly to study and discuss the word. consider focusing on just one of these parts each week. this pace will allow you to enjoy several days reading and meditating on the scriptures as you reflect on what the Holy Spirit reveals to you before you meet to talk about it.

however, you are welcome to **move through it at whatever pace works for your discipling relationship**. everything is provided for your benefit—feel free to use it in the way that works best for you as the Spirit leads.

**teach me your way, o Lord,
that I may walk in your truth;
unite my heart to fear your name.**

psalm 86:11



what is the bible?

what is the bible?

the life of a disciple of Jesus begins with knowing God through his self-revelation—his word, the bible. as followers of Jesus, we look to the bible as **our final authority for life and truth**.

but what exactly is the bible, and how do we know we can trust it?

we will let the bible speak for itself, but first, a few basics:

- the bible is made up of 66 books: 39 in the old testament and 27 in the new testament.
- in its original text, the old testament is written in hebrew, with some sections being written in aramaic, and the new testament is written primarily in greek.
- the bible, while one book, is made up of different writing styles and genres: narrative, poetry, wisdom, prophecy, gospels, epistles, and apocalyptic.
- while written by over 40 human authors over a span of 1,500 years, every word of the bible has been given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

as we begin, take a minute to consider and make note of what you currently know or believe about the bible.

» *what have you been taught about the bible?*

» *when you think about the bible, what questions come to mind?*

apart from God's written word, we would have no way to intimately know him.

the bible is God's self-revelation of his character and the story of his faithfulness to his people. it also unveils his plan of redemption through his son, Jesus Christ, who is king of the kingdom God is building.

God, in his benevolent love and grace, has made himself known to his image bearers through his written word. the bible teaches us everything we need to know to love and follow God. anytime we read his word we should be asking ourselves, "**what does this scripture tell me about God and his character?**" because the entire bible is all about him!

*for whatever was written in former days was
written for our instruction, that through endurance
and through the encouragement of the scriptures
we might have hope.*

romans 15:4

authority

» *as we begin to talk about the authority of scripture, it is helpful to first understand what is generally meant by the term authority. how would you define the word? does it conjure up positive or negative connotations for you? why?*

as followers of Christ, the bible is our final authority, so we turn to the bible to learn what it has to say about itself.

- **deuteronomy 12:32**
- **isaiah 40:8**
- **matthew 5:17-19**
- **john 17:8, 17**
- **romans 15:4**
- **1 thessalonians 2:13**

» *what do these scriptures say about God's word? was any of this new or surprising to you?*

» *drawing from what you read, why is it imperative that we believe wholeheartedly in the authority of scripture?*

the bible is authoritative; it is the definition of absolute truth.

the authority of the bible is the standard by which we evaluate the truthfulness of every other voice out there...including our own. the bible is not primarily a list of rules to live by because God is not merely concerned with our right behavior—**he is jealous for our hearts and our minds.**

we must always seek to understand what God is saying in his word and not infuse our own meaning into the text. the bible is authoritative and infallible; our interpretation of the bible is not. we are never to use scripture to support our own desires and agendas. rather, as we read God's word with the help of the Holy Spirit, **our minds will be renewed, our hearts will soften, and we will change to become more like Christ** as we live in response to the authority of scripture.

- **deuteronomy 30:11-20**
- **psalm 40:6-8**
- **psalm 119:160**
- **jeremiah 7:23-24**
- **john 8:31-32**
- **james 1:21-25**

» *what are some qualities of a life lived in submission to the authority of scripture? what does this mean for your daily life?*

ultimately, we submit to the authority of the bible because we have surrendered our lives to the authority of God, and **the bible is the very word of God.**

“since God is the author, the bible is authoritative. it is absolute in its authority for human thought and behaviour. ‘as the scripture has said’ is a recurring theme throughout the new testament. in fact, the new testament contains more than two hundred direct quotations of the old testament. in addition, the new testament has a large and uncertain number of allusions to the old. new testament writers, following the example of Jesus Christ, built their theology on the old testament. for Christ and the apostles, to quote the bible was to settle an issue.” —**robertson mcquillin**

sufficiency

scripture is authoritative above all other sources, yet consider this question:

» *throughout your life, what has most informed your knowledge of God?*

when we speak of the sufficiency of scripture, we mean that the bible alone is God's word and **nothing else is necessary for each of us to know him**—no additional teachings or books will teach us more about God than that which the bible has already revealed.

there is often a largely unspoken belief that only pastors and theologians can really understand the bible, and the rest of us need to rely on them to tell us what it says. but rest assured: **the whole word of God is written for all the people of God for all time**. it is closed and complete; we are not waiting on any further revelation or new word from God.

the bible, being the very word of God, is enough for each of us to know and follow God. scripture interprets scripture, so when we come across a passage where the meaning is unclear, **looking up cross references will often give us a fuller understanding**.

consider these scriptures and how they point to the sufficiency of scripture in the life of a believer.

- **deuteronomy 4:2**
- **psalm 19:7-9**
- **psalm 119:105**
- **proverbs 30:5-6**
- **matthew 24:35**
- **luke 24:44-45**
- **john 20:30-31**
- **2 peter 1:3-4**

commentaries and other outside sources can be useful in helping us grow in our understanding of God's word, but they should never replace God's word in our minds and hearts nor should we ever elevate what we read outside of scripture above scripture itself. **only the Bible is the inspired and inerrant word of God**. the words of mere humans can never tell us more about God than God himself has revealed to us in his word.

not everything that is written or taught about God is necessarily true or faithful to God's word. that is why it is crucial that we, as followers of Christ, become intimately familiar with the bible so we can quickly spot false teaching.

what do these verses tell us about teachings that go against scripture?

- **mark 13:22-23**
- **galatians 1:6-9**
- **colossians 2:8**
- **2 timothy 4:3-4**

» *in what ways does our culture and the world tell us that scripture isn't enough?*

» *why is it important to believe in the sufficiency of scripture? what dangers could we encounter if we don't?*

» *now, with a greater understanding of the sufficiency of scripture, spend time with the Lord and ask him to show you other sources you have relied on to inform your knowledge of him.*

authorship

the 66 books of the bible were written by approximately 40 human authors, but the bible is also **one book written by one author: God**. this was not a collaborative effort where God contributed some and human authors contributed the rest; God the Holy Spirit was inspiring every word of scripture through the individual personalities and writing styles of those whom he chose for the task of penning his word.

in scripture, we receive the voice of God in human words.

since the beginning of time, God has been speaking. he is a God who loves to communicate with and longs to be known by his children, and he's still speaking to us today through his written word.

in the **old testament**, God communicated his message to and through prophets, priests, and kings who then wrote as God's mouthpiece to his people.

- **numbers 12:6**
- **2 samuel 23:1-2**
- **daniel 9:9-10**
- **isaiah 30:8**
- **jeremiah 30:1-2**
- **habakkuk 2:1-3**

in the **new testament**, God communicated to and through disciples, witnesses, and church leaders who wrote personal accounts and letters to churches. additionally, the new testament contains the very words of Jesus himself.

- **luke 4:16-21**
- **john 14:1-6**
- **2 timothy 3:16-17**
- **2 peter 1:16-21**
- **hebrews 1:1-2**
- **revelation 21:5**

» *what do you see in these scriptures that speaks to the divine authorship of the words written by men?*

» *we must keep in mind that both the old and the new testament were written with the divine authority of the same triune God. why is this important as we consider the authorship of scripture?*

the tension of the divine and the human authorship being contained in one book is ultimately not something we can fully comprehend. similarly, in his incarnation, Jesus, who is the word made flesh, embodied both the divine and the human in one being: both fully God and fully man.

both of these truths are a mystery. our faith requires that we accept what we cannot understand, and this faith is a gracious gift from God.

*so faith comes from hearing,
and hearing through the word of Christ.*

romans 10:17

power

the bible is unlike any other book ever written because it contains the very words of God. the bible has the power to soften hearts and change lives and give us access to the one who has revealed himself to us through his word.

God is still speaking to his children through his written word by the power of the Holy Spirit.

*sanctify them
in the truth,
your word is truth.*

» *if you read the bible as the very voice of God rather than merely print on a page, how would that change how you interact with scripture?*

john 17:17

» *what needs to change in order for you to come to the scriptures expecting to hear God's voice?*

in genesis 1, we see the repetition of “**and God said**” followed by action; whatever God spoke became reality. the same voice that spoke creation into existence speaks to us today through the written word of God.

as you read the verses below, notice all the ways you see God's word is powerful.

- **psalm 29:1-9**
- **isaiah 55:10-11**
- **jeremiah 23:29**
- **matthew 4:4**

- **john 1:1-5**
- **2 timothy 3:14-15**
- **hebrews 4:12**
- **1 peter 1:22-25**

» *how would you define power? what does it mean to you that God's word has power?*

» *how have you experienced the power of God's word in your own life?*

God's word has the power to renew our minds and transform our lives. we have access to that power every single day as God invites us to know his power through his word.

» *pause and reflect on the supernatural gift of God's word and how he desires to reveal himself to you through it:*

- *thank him for his word.*
- *confess to him any struggles you have with it.*
- *bring to him any questions you have about the bible.*
- *ask him for greater understanding and an insatiable hunger for his word.*

*for the word of the cross is folly to those who are
perishing, but to us who are being saved
it is the power of God.*

1 corinthians 1:18





**who is
God?**

who is God?

we live in a post-christian nation where many claim to be “spiritual” and would assent to the existence of a higher power of some sort. there are many different ideas about God and theories about the nature of who God is. this is why **we so desperately need to know the God of the bible**, because the god of our culture and of our liking is not the true God of creation.

at the beginning of time, God made humankind in his own image; however, far too often we tend to make him in our own image by viewing him according to our human nature and desires. **the God of the bible is not like us; he is transcendent**—beyond the limits of all possible knowledge and experience. although he is not necessarily always who we think we want him to be, he is absolutely always everything we need him to be.

- » *what are some culturally popular views of God?*
- » *who is he to you?*
- » *how would you define or describe God? on what do you base your view of him?*
- » *what questions do you have about God?*

the attributes of God are vast and essential to our understanding of who God is. some of these attributes apply to God alone (incommunicable), and because we are made in his image, some can also be true of us, though never perfectly (communicable).

here are some examples of each:

incommunicable

- **omnipresence**
- **omniscience**
- **omnipotence**
- **immutability**
- **self-existence**
- **eternality**
- **sovereignty**

communicable

- **goodness**
- **justice**
- **love**
- **mercy**
- **truthfulness**
- **wisdom**
- **holiness**

- » *which of God's attributes are you most thankful for? which most lead you to worship him?*
- » *what other attributes of God can you think of to add to these lists?*

holy

» *before we dive into this attribute, consider what comes to mind when you hear the word holy. in your own words, how would you define holiness?*

most succinctly, to be holy means to be set apart. God is holy in and of himself. he is entirely set apart and has no equal. he is completely transcendent and is perfect in all his ways, and it is *in* and *because of* his holiness that he does all things.

it is his holiness that stirs our awe and reverence—his holiness is both beautiful and terrifying:

- **exodus 3:2-6**
- **deuteronomy 5:24**
- **hebrews 12:28-29**

God is jealous for his holiness and his glory. God's jealousy is not like ours—his jealousy comes from his holiness, whereas our jealousy comes from our selfish desires, fears, and insecurities. God is jealous for us to worship him alone because he has created us for his good pleasure (philippians 2:13). there is none greater or holier than he, so it is he alone we are to worship.

- **exodus 20:1-7**
- **exodus 34:14**
- **isaiah 42:8**
- **ezekiel 36:20-23**

in our sin we cannot stand in the presence of God's holiness. because he is holy, our sin separates us from God forever if we are not in Christ, but because of Jesus, we too can be called *holy*.

- **genesis 3:22-24**
- **colossians 1:21-22**
- **hebrews 12:14**
- **1 peter 1:13-16**

ultimately, we will worship him in his holiness for all eternity.

- **exodus 15:11**
- **psalm 96:6-9**
- **isaiah 6:1-7**
- **revelation 4:8-11**

as you reflect on what you've read, consider these questions:

- » *how have these verses shaped how you view God's holiness?*
- » *do you truly believe that, in Christ, God sees you as holy? why or why not?*
- » *in learning about God's holiness, what most draws you to worship him?*

“if God is holy, then he can't sin. if God can't sin, then he can't sin against me. if he can't sin against me, shouldn't that make him the most trustworthy being there is?”
—**jackie hill perry**

love

culturally, the word *love* means many different things to many different people. people define love according to their preferences and perspectives. however, love did not originate with humankind, so our attempt to define love will never encapsulate the full understanding of **the one who is himself love: God is love** (1 john 4:8).

» *what do you believe about God's love, or what have you been taught about it?*

he is love eternal

every attribute of God is true of him fully and eternally; love is no exception. from eternity past, before time began, God has always lived in loving communion as one Godhead in the persons of the trinity: God the father, God the son, and God the Holy Spirit. he has eternally been satisfied in himself not needing anything or lacking in any way.

God is love eternal so everything he does is done in love. it is out of that love that God created the universe and everything in it—including you and me. we live to love and glorify him.

- deuteronomy 10:14-15
- psalm 102:25-27
- psalm 103:17-19
- john 17:22-26
- acts 17:24-28
- ephesians 1:3-6

he loved us first

there is nothing we could have ever done to earn God's love for us. God loves us because he chose to love us. as a child of God, you are fully loved by him regardless of anything you have done; love is his motivation in choosing you.

- deuteronomy 7:6-8
- job 7:17
- john 3:16
- romans 5:6-11
- ephesians 2:4-5
- 1 john 4:7-19

» *why is it important to believe that God loved us first?*

» *do you ever struggle to believe that you are truly loved by God? why or why not?*

his love endures forever

the phrase *steadfast love* is used around 200 times throughout the bible to describe God's unending love for his people. God's love for us is based upon his own faithfulness to his covenant promises, and we can trust his faithfulness. just as there is nothing we can do to earn God's love, there is also nothing we have to do to *keep* God's love.

- deuteronomy 7:9
- psalm 136:1-26
- jeremiah 31:3
- romans 8:38-39

God is love from eternity past and his love will endure through all of eternity future.

because he loves us first—before us and in spite of us—we can be set free from any false belief that we have to live perfectly for God to love us or *keep* loving us.

omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent

occasionally, there are theological terms used to describe God and his work that do not actually show up in the text of scripture. however, the concepts they describe are clearly spelled out in God's word. *omniscient*, *omnipotent*, and *omnipresent* are three such terms.

these are the words that we use to affirm that **God is all-knowing, all-powerful, and is at all times present everywhere**. he is not bound by time or space or any other limits. he alone is above and outside of these things that constrain us in our human existence, and these are attributes that must be true of him for him to truly be transcendent.

omniscience

God is all-knowing. there is nothing about anything that God does not already know. this means nothing in all of history or in the future will catch God by surprise. this also means that there is nothing about you—no thought or detail of your life—that is not fully known by God.

- 1 kings 8:37-39
- 1 chronicles 28:9
- psalm 56:8
- isaiah 46:9-10
- luke 12:7
- 1 john 3:19-20

- » *what does God specifically know according to these scriptures?*
- » *is it comforting or disconcerting to think about God knowing absolutely everything? why?*

omnipotence

God is all-powerful. there is nothing he cannot do. no one and no thing on heaven or earth or under the earth is equal to or more powerful than our God. it is important to note that just because he *can* do anything, doesn't necessarily mean he will. rather, he is able to do everything in accordance with his divine will. he has the power to accomplish his purposes and fulfill his promises.

- job 26:7-14
- jeremiah 10:12-13
- matthew 8:23-27
- romans 1:20
- 1 corinthians 6:14
- ephesians 3:20-21

- » *what do these verses reveal about God's power?*
- » *how have you seen his power at work?*
- » *what are some practical ways you can rely on God's power in your everyday life?*

omnipresence

God is everywhere. since God is spirit, he is not confined to time or space or a body as we are. he is with us right here, wherever we are, while at the same time with a believer on the other side of the globe. because this is true, we can be sure that he is always present—always with us in every moment of every day.

- deuteronomy 31:6-8
- 1 kings 8:22-27
- jeremiah 23:23-24
- ezekiel 37:14
- matthew 28:18-20
- ephesians 4:4-6

sovereign

perhaps one of the most frustrating things about our existence is the finitude of our minds and our human limitations. we can never see the whole picture, nor can we control very much at all in this life. this lack of control can leave us feeling both helpless and hopeless at times.

thankfully, God is not like us: **he is infinite and limitless**. he not only knows everything, he is also in control of everything. absolutely every event in all of history, including every detail of your life, has been under the sovereignty of God. nothing can shock him or catch him off guard.

because he alone supremely rules all things, he alone can be trusted with our whole lives.

the unfortunate reality of living in this sinful, fallen world is that we will all experience times of hardship and pain. it is difficult for our human minds to reconcile suffering and tragedy with God's sovereignty and goodness.

we may never be able to make sense of it in this life, but in faith, **we can trust ourselves to our heavenly father's loving hands and perfect sovereignty**. we can take comfort in knowing that he sees the whole picture, is always in control, and his character has not changed. God's sovereignty leads us to worship him.

» *it's common to wrestle with the sovereignty of God. what specific things in your life have caused you to question his goodness or love in light of his sovereignty?*

psalm 139

this psalm provides a powerful description of God's sovereignty. as david faces very real enemies (verses 19-22), he focuses on the character of God which increases his awe of the Lord and gives him a proper perspective of everything: himself, his enemies, his world, and most importantly, his God.

spend ample time this week reading and meditating on this chapter. read it repeatedly, don't rush, and engage with the Lord as he reveals himself to you through his word.

» *what do these verses teach you about God's sovereignty and grandeur?*

» *what details from this passage cause you to worship God in light of his sovereignty?*

» *do you take comfort in God's sovereignty? why or why not? with complete honesty, tell God where you are currently struggling to trust him.*

as we end this section, take time to consider all that you have learned about God and worship him for who he is.

a God who is all love, all grace, all mercy, no sovereignty, no justice, no holiness, and no wrath is an idol. —r.c. sproul



**who is
Jesus?**

who is Jesus?

for to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting father, prince of peace.

isaiah 9:6

» *before beginning this section, in your own words, who is Jesus?*

Jesus is the true and only son of God. **the entire bible points to him** as he is the fulfillment of all the promises of God. he, though fully God, took on human flesh, lived a perfect, obedient life, died a sinless death, and forever conquered the grave by rising from the dead. **he *is* the gospel.**

throughout the pages of scripture, Jesus is called by many different names and descriptions. **these names give us a greater view of his grandeur.** while the list below is in no way meant to be exhaustive, let it lead you to worship as you consider his splendor and majesty.

- ***immanuel***—isaiah 7:14
- ***man of sorrows***—isaiah 53:3
- ***son of man***—matthew 20:28
- ***savior***—luke 2:11
- ***friend of sinners***—luke 7:34
- ***word of God***—john 1:1
- ***creator***—john 1:2-4
- ***lamb of God***—john 1:29
- ***son of God***—john 1:34
- ***bread of life***—john 6:33-35
- ***light of the world***—john 8:12, 9:5
- ***good shepherd***—john 10:11-15
- ***the way, the truth, and the life***—john 14:6
- ***lord***—romans 10:9
- ***redeemer***—galatians 4:4-5
- ***high priest***—hebrews 4:14-16
- ***founder and perfecter of our faith***—hebrews 12:2
- ***lion of judah***—revelation 5:5
- ***king***—revelation 17:14
- ***alpha and omega***—revelation 22:13

Jesus, the eternally existent son of God has been the word of God since creation. he is the lion of judah and the sacrificial lamb of God who is the way, the truth, and the life. in the incarnation, he came as the son of man—immanuel, God with us—in order to become our savior and our great high priest who intercedes for us before the father. and for those of us who have trusted in him, he is now and forever, our Lord and king.

son of God

the Godhead has eternally existed as one God in three persons: God the father, God the son, and God the Holy Spirit. this three-in-one doctrine of God is known as the *trinity*, and the son of God is the second member of the trinity. he is eternal and co-equal with both God the father and God the Holy Spirit—all three sharing the same essence as one Godhead.

although he is the son, he is in no way less than God the father, nor was he created by the father. because of our understanding of the human father-son relationship, it can be difficult to comprehend how a son could be both equal to and not created by a father, but the bible tells us that **the son is God just as much as the father is God.**

- john 10:30-38
- john 14:8-11
- 2 corinthians 4:3-6
- colossians 1:15-17

» *what questions do you have about Jesus as son of God or about his relationship to God the father?*

Jesus, before he ever came to earth as a baby in a manger, has always been the eternally existent son of God. there was never a time when God the father existed without the son. **Jesus is now and has always been fully God.**

while our finite minds can never grasp a timeless eternity past, there was a point in history when time began, and the son of God was there—present and active in the works of creation.

- genesis 1:26
- proverbs 30:4
- john 1:1-3
- john 17:5
- hebrews 11:3
- revelation 21:6

» *have you ever considered the son of God to be actively involved in creation? does this change how you read the creation account? why or why not?*

» *in what ways is the eternity of Jesus significant?*

during his earthly ministry, **Jesus publicly proclaimed that he is the one and only God.** this infuriated the religious leaders of the day who accused him of blasphemy. their anger and indignation drove them to sentence him to death. the son of God was crucified because they would rather silence him than surrender to him as God. this was the plan of God from before time began—our redemption through his crucified son.

whoever confesses that Jesus is the son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

1 john 4:15

- mark 14:55-64
- john 8:34-59
- acts 2:23-24
- revelation 22:13

» *the crucifixion of Jesus was always the eternal plan of the triune God. what are the implications of this truth?*

son of man

from eternity past, the son of God dwelled in glory and perfect fellowship with God the father and God the Holy Spirit. in the incarnation, God put on human flesh—**the son of God became, for us, the son of man in the person of Jesus.**

- john 1:14
- romans 8:3
- galatians 4:4
- hebrews 2:14-18

» *what are the implications of God the son becoming the son of man?*

Jesus left glory and came to earth, but in doing so he never lost a single element of his divinity as he lived as a man among men. he was always, at every moment on earth, **both fully God and fully man.** because he was fully man, he experienced the joys and trials of the human life like we do—except because he is fully God, he did it perfectly and completely without sin.

- isaiah 53:2-5
- matthew 4:1-11
- mark 10:45
- mark 15:16-20
- john 11:32-42
- hebrews 4:15

» *how do these verses show Jesus' true humanity as the son of man?*

» *Jesus Christ, the son of man, encountered temptation and felt pain in ways similar to what you have endured. how does this impact how you come to him with your sin and suffering?*

just as the son retained his divinity in the incarnation, in the resurrection he rose to life in bodily form and **is both God and man forever.** his ministry and claims of divinity were proven true by his physical resurrection.

in his resurrection, he also proves that **our promised resurrection is both physical and true,** not merely spiritual or theoretical. he has gone before us in his physical, glorified body; one day, we too, will be with him in our glorified, incorruptible, imperishable but very physical bodies.

- luke 24:36-39
- acts 26:22-23
- romans 8:23
- 1 corinthians 15:20-24, 53
- philippians 3:20-21
- colossians 1:18-20

» *have you ever considered that Jesus will forever be both God and man? how does this affect your view of your relationship with him?*

have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

philippians 2:5-8

savior

since the fall of humanity, we have been under the curse of sin and death. in disobeying God, adam and eve sinned, causing insurmountable separation between humankind and the God of the universe. because of the holiness of God, under the curse of sin, **our debt to him requires either perfect obedience or our very lives.**

but no man is able to do all that is required to perfectly fulfill the law and live a sinless life. no human could die on our behalf to save us from the wrath of God. only God himself could accomplish this task.

in him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight.

ephesians 1:7-8

God the son became the son of man in order to become our savior.

- **genesis 2:15-17**
- **romans 6:23**
- **colossians 2:13-14**

Jesus' perfect life was absolutely necessary to accomplish our salvation. under the sacrificial system in the old testament, there was a repeated requirement for the sacrifice: it had to be an animal without blemish. for that reason, Jesus Christ, as the sacrificial lamb of God, had to be perfect in every way so that, covered by his blood and righteousness, we could also be seen by God as perfect.

- **ephesians 5:25-27**
- **colossians 1:21-22**
- **1 peter 1:18-19**

in the crucifixion, all the sin and unrighteousness that was ours was placed upon Christ on the cross. when he died, our guilt, the curse of sin, died too. in one moment in time, **he endured what was our eternal plight: the wrath of God on account of sin.** the pain of the burden he gladly took on was fully felt by him—every excruciating second. this is what he came to accomplish for our salvation.

- **psalm 22:16-18**
- **isaiah 53:10-11**
- **luke 22:39-45**
- **1 peter 2:24**
- **hebrews 9:23-28**
- **hebrews 12:1-2**

» *the pain that Christ endured is unimaginable, and yet he did it willingly.
what is the posture of your heart towards him as you consider the crucifixion?*

he became our savior because there was no way for us to save ourselves.

in john 19:30, Jesus says, "it is finished" as he breathed his last on the cross. in uttering these words, Jesus declared that the debt we owe has been paid in full; there is nothing else to be done or added to his work for us to be saved. **we can rest in his finished work** and the grace that he lavishes upon us.

» *in what ways are you tempted to "work" to make yourself right with God?
is it easy for you to rest in his grace? why or why not?*

"Christ is much more powerful to save, than adam was to destroy." —john calvin

lord and king

we are eager and delighted to have Jesus as our savior, but he is so much more. **he is both our savior *and* our Lord and king.**

when we confess that Jesus is our Lord, we are willingly yielding our lives to his authority and control—**we surrender our lives to him.** this truth gives many of us pause because we often desire to be lord and king of our own lives.

surrender may sound undesirable, but in truth, **it is freeing.** we no longer have to live according to the demanding desires of our sinful nature; instead, we get to live in glad, daily submission to our kind and loving Lord.

- **luke 9:23-24**
- **romans 10:9-10**
- **philippians 2:9-11**
- **colossians 1:13-14**

» *have you surrendered yourself to Jesus, making him Lord of your life? if so, take some time to reflect on that journey and praise him for his work in your life. if not, what is keeping you from making him your Lord?*

salvation is so much more than just escaping eternal damnation: we have been saved by a king into the kingdom of God. we are not saved to serve ourselves or build our own little kingdoms, but we are to be about building his true and lasting kingdom. we cannot live in two kingdoms or serve two kings.

he alone is king and deserves our full allegiance and unbridled worship.

- **isaiah 9:6-7**
- **daniel 7:13-14**
- **micah 5:2-5**
- **john 18:36-37**

» *what do you learn about Jesus and his kingdom from these verses?*

» *spend some time gazing at Jesus your king. how does this view of him deepen your worship?*

in the crucifixion, Christ became our savior by putting to death our sin and guilt once and for all. in the resurrection, he walked out of the grave, proving once and for all **he has power over even death itself.** once dead but now alive, Christ sits at the right hand of God the father as the ruling and reigning king of kings and Lord of lords.

- **psalm 45:6**
- **romans 6:9-10**
- **romans 14:9**
- **revelation 1:17-18**

» *when you consider the facets of Jesus in these four sections, which aspect of him most resonates with you?*

» *which part does he need to help you understand and love more deeply?*

*the lamb will conquer them,
for he is Lord of lords and king of kings,
and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.*

revelation 17:14



who is the Holy Spirit?

who is the Holy Spirit?

for most people, the Holy Spirit is the least understood member of the trinity. we can somewhat wrap our brains around the fact that God the son became God in the flesh as the son of man, Jesus. additionally, God the father, although he is spirit, is frequently described in scripture with human physical and emotional characteristics which can help us relate to him.

perhaps one reason the Holy Spirit is more challenging to understand is simply because people avoid discussing what the scriptures have to say about him; **lack of knowledge has led to a fear of the unknown.** sometimes we don't want to risk getting him wrong, so we just ignore him all together.

» *before you begin this section, reflect on what you know about the Holy Spirit and what questions you have concerning him.*

in the same way that God the father and God the son are eternal, so too is God the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit is referred to throughout scripture with the personal *he*, not the abstract *it*. he is not inanimate or unrelatable. he is so many things to and for us:

- **breath of God**—job 32:8, 33:4
- **helper**—john 14:16
- **our reminder**—john 14:26
- **convictor of sin**—john 16:7-8
- **teacher**—john 16:13-14
- **divine power**—acts 1:8
- **witness**—romans 8:16
- **intercessor**—romans 8:26-27
- **sanctifier**—romans 15:14-17
- **revealer**—1 corinthians 2:10-11
- **gift giver**—1 corinthians 12:7-11
- **security**—ephesians 1:13-14
- **wisdom**—ephesians 1:16-19
- **truth**—1 john 4:6

while the Holy Spirit has always existed, in the old testament he came upon specific individuals for specific purposes. however, there was a promise: **one day the Holy Spirit would indwell all who called upon the name of the Lord.**

the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus ushered in the new covenant, and with it came the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit for every son and daughter of God. covered by the blood of Christ and made one with our savior, the chasm separating us from God has been bridged, and his Spirit is now forever ours as well. if you are a child of God, the Holy Spirit is as near to you as your own heartbeat.

and it shall come to pass afterward, that i will pour out my Spirit on all flesh: your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. even on the male and female servants in those days i will pour out my Spirit...and it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

joel 2:28-29, 32

indwelling

in the old testament, the people of God had very limited access to the Spirit of God. however, God assured his people that **he would dwell with them**. for that reason, God repeatedly commanded his people to build a tabernacle or temple where he would dwell in their midst.

with the coming of Jesus in the new testament, **people now had access to God in the flesh**. even still, their access was limited to proximity because Jesus the man was not omnipresent as he walked upon the earth. not until after Jesus returned to heaven was the promised Holy Spirit permanently given to the believers in the book of acts.

filled with the Spirit of God, **we are now his temple** and the dwelling place of God is *with* and *in* his daughters and sons.

- **exodus 25:8-9**
- **exodus 29:43-46**
- **acts 2:1-4**
- **1 corinthians 3:16-17**
- **1 corinthians 6:18-20**
- **ephesians 2:18-22**

» *imagine being an old testament believer with limited access to God. spend time thanking God for the gift he has given us in the indwelling Holy Spirit.*

» *what does it mean that you are God's temple? does realizing the nearness of God change how you live and worship?*

the law of God consists of more than just the ten commandments written on stone. in the first five books of the old testament, moses records over 600 civil, ceremonial, and moral laws that the israelites, as God's chosen people, were required to follow.

in part, these laws served as reminders to them that they were to look like the God to whom they belonged. **God is holy and they were his set-apart people**. the law instructed them how to follow God; their faith was largely external—living in obedience out of fear and reverence.

- **exodus 32:15-16**
- **deuteronomy 30:15-20**
- **romans 7:7-12**

now, with the coming of the Holy Spirit, we as children of God are invited and empowered to **live in obedience from a place of freedom and relationship**. the Holy Spirit dwelling inside us, draws us to Jesus—showing us our desperate need for him, bringing us from death to life in Christ, and convicting us of our sins that we may repent and live free.

instead of having the law written on tablets of stone, by the work and power of the Holy Spirit, we have **the law written on our hearts**.

- **jeremiah 31:31-34**
- **ezekiel 36:26-27**
- **romans 8:1-4**

since we are covered in the blood of Jesus, God the father sees his son when he looks at us. in his loving-kindness, the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin in order to progressively make us more like Christ through a process referred to in the bible as *sanctification*. **the Spirit works in us to make us look more like Jesus**.

helper

the life of a christian centers on increasingly becoming more like Christ, which is not something we can do on our own—nor does God expect us to. **he has given us his indwelling Spirit to help us** live “in a manner worthy of [our] calling” (ephesians 4:1).

in the original language of the new testament, the greek word that is often used synonymously with the Holy Spirit is *paraclete*. because of the limitations of language, there is no exact translation for *paraclete* in english.

in the english standard version of the bible, *paraclete* is most often translated as *helper*. however, the other translations also use: *advocate*, *counselor*, or *comforter*, and all are correct because *paraclete*, in a single word, means all of those things.

the Holy Spirit is indeed our helper, advocate, counselor, and comforter.

God’s promise to restore his presence with his people culminated in the incarnation of Jesus. after years of friendship and physical proximity to his followers, with his crucifixion imminent, Jesus comforted his disciples by promising that **God the father would send another helper in his place** who would be with them forever. though their hearts and minds could not fathom it, Jesus insisted it would actually be better for him to leave so the helper could come.

- matthew 10:16-20
- john 14:15-21
- john 15:26
- john 16:7-11
- romans 5:3-5
- galatians 5:22-25

» *what do these verses reveal about the Holy Spirit being our helper, advocate, counselor, and comforter? how do these truths broaden your understanding of him?*

» *in what ways have you seen the Holy Spirit be your paraclete?*

reading with God

God has given us his word that we might know him, but **we need his help to even understand what we are reading**. the word is “living and active” (hebrews 4:12) because the Spirit inside us is living and active and present as we read and meditate on the scriptures.

the Holy Spirit illumines our minds as we read scripture, teaching us the truths of God and convicting us of sin. without depending on the Holy Spirit—asking for his wisdom and praying for understanding—reading the bible becomes simply an empty religious duty. without the Holy Spirit, we cannot know God. **with the Spirit, you and i have the mind of Christ**.

- john 14:22-26
- john 16:12-15
- 1 corinthians 2:9-16
- 2 timothy 2:7

praying to God

just as the Holy Spirit helps as we read the word, **he also helps us communicate with God**. prayer can be difficult. this is not a common confession among believers: no one wants to admit that talking with God doesn’t always come naturally. we don’t always know what to say or how to verbalize what is on our heart. sometimes all we have to offer is unfiltered crying in pain or raging in anger at God; those are prayers from our

divine power

shortly before Jesus ascended into heaven, he gave his disciples this command: “go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (matthew 28:19). **all nations. everyone. to the ends of the earth.**

surely an impossible feat for mere humans. they would need power—divine power—to accomplish such a lofty mission. which is why Jesus coupled this command with a caveat: stay put until you receive power from on high. Jesus knew, **without the coming of the promised indwelling Holy Spirit, their words would have no power**, and they would likely cower in fear in the same way they had at his arrest and crucifixion.

- acts 1:4-8

- acts 2:1-11

- acts 4:7-13

» **read matthew 26:69-75 and acts 3:1-16.** *compare peter before and after receiving the Holy Spirit.*

» *are there any similar comparisons you can make in your own life: your life without the Holy Spirit versus your life with the Holy Spirit?*

the Holy Spirit is the divine power of God. he was at work both in creation and in the conception of Jesus, and if you are his, you have access to that same power through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

we are intentionally unable to live the holy, set-apart life to which we have been called without the divine power of the Holy Spirit. we cannot come to Christ without this power drawing us to him. by the power of the Spirit, we can surrender our lives to our Lord and king, and together with paul say, “it is no longer i who live, but Christ who lives in me” (galatians 2:20).

- zechariah 4:6-7

- romans 8:9-11

- romans 15:13

- 1 thessalonians 1:4-7

» *in what ways do these verses speak of the Holy Spirit's power?*

» *what questions do you have about the power of the Holy Spirit?*

as we walk in the power of the Spirit, **we are changed into the image of Christ** for our own sanctification and for the building up of God's church. accordingly, the Holy Spirit empowers us by giving us each gifts that have been appointed for us from the foundation of the world. by the power of the Holy Spirit, our hearts are changed and our desires increasingly mirror those of our Lord Jesus.

- romans 15:15-20

- 1 corinthians 6:9-11

- 1 corinthians 12:4-31

- ephesians 3:14-21

» *how does seeing the power of the Holy Spirit in these verses encourage your intimacy with and obedience to God?*

» *in what ways have you seen the Holy Spirit's power at work in your life?*

“when we have the Holy Spirit, we have all that is needed to be all that God desires us to be.” —**a.w. tozer**

security

the life of a believer is a life of faith. yet in this fallen world, our faith can often be easily shaken. **suffering, temptation, sin, and doubt can work to shatter our confidence.** there may be times when we feel like we are holding onto faith—with both fists clenched—desperately clinging to Jesus for fear we might lose our faith, or worse, our salvation.

God knew. he knew we would doubt and struggle and waiver, and in his grace, he has provided for all of our insecurities. the Holy Spirit has been given as both our assurance and our guarantee of the eternal life we have in Christ Jesus. faith is not something we can prove, but is rather something that is proven in us as we live and walk by the Spirit.

now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

hebrews 11:1

- romans 8:14-17
- 2 corinthians 5:5
- galatians 4:4-7
- ephesians 1:11-14

- » *what has caused you to question your faith or doubt your salvation?*
- » *how does God's word help you combat those insecurities?*

in the old testament, God promises to never leave his people. in the new testament, Jesus promises to always be with his disciples. however, Jesus incarnate does not, in fact, remain with them; instead he assures them he will not leave them as orphans but will live *in* them. with the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God takes up residence within his children fulfilling his promise of permanence—and **that Spirit will never be taken away.**

- matthew 28:18-20
- john 14:18-20
- 2 corinthians 1:20-22

- » *what are the implications of the permanent indwelling presence of the Spirit of God in your daily life?*
- » *how can you become more aware of the Spirit's presence in your life?*

not one single person comes to Jesus simply out of reason or intellect. we don't have faith in God because we are somehow smarter than our unbelieving neighbor. we would not know Christ apart from the Holy Spirit. it is the Spirit of God who draws us to faith, gives us the gift of faith, and sustains us in that faith. **by the power of the Spirit we are saved, and by the power of the Spirit we will persevere to the end.**

- matthew 11:25-30
- john 6:44
- 1 corinthians 12:3
- philippians 1:6
- 1 john 3:19-24
- 1 john 4:2-4

- » *in these verses, what do you see of the Spirit's pursuing and sustaining work in your salvation?*
- » *how does a greater understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit help ease your doubts and fears?*



**what is
the
story?**

what is the story?

the bible is one book made up of 66 smaller books. these books vary in genre; they contain stories, poems, wisdom, prophecies, instructions, and laws. the whole bible was written over a span of 1500 years, so it can seem that the content is perhaps anecdotal and disconnected. nothing could be further from the truth. the bible was written by many different human authors, but ultimately has one divine author. **this is all God's story, and it is all about him.**

scripture tells **one overarching story of a faithful God who pursues his people relentlessly**—literally moving heaven and earth to dwell with those who are his. every smaller story recorded within the pages of scripture serve both to show the depravity of all people and humanity's desperate need for a savior. these accounts paint a picture of just how inadequate the greatest heroes in history were to even save themselves, let alone anyone else.

undergirding each story is the resounding theme that we need a savior and the declaration that the true savior is coming.

from the beginning of time, he has purposed to create a people for his own possession. however, our first parents brought sin into the world, fracturing creation and our access to a holy God.

God, in his steadfast love, determined to reconcile us to himself and redeem our lives for his name's sake; one day he promises that **all things will be made new** as evil is put to death and we are able to live in the presence of our savior for all eternity.

the narrative of scripture moves from creation to the fall of adam and eve, followed by centuries of God promising a coming redemption which is fulfilled in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ.

however, that is not the end of the story.

in the end, we are promised that God will be faithful to restore all things to their intended perfect design in the creation of the new heavens and the new earth. he will eternally dwell with his people—which has been his divine plan since before time began.

creation → fall → redemption → restoration: this is the story of the bible

"i am the alpha and the omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the almighty."

revelation 1:8

creation

there was a time when time did not exist. we cannot comprehend this—and it makes our brains hurt if we try. absolutely nothing existed—except God...

then God spoke. the beginning of creation was now permanently fixed in time.

» **read genesis 1:1-2:3** to familiarize yourself with the creation story. even if you have read it a thousand times before, read it again, slowly, asking the Holy Spirit to give you eyes to see and a heart to understand more deeply the wondrous works of our praise-worthy creator.

- **day 1**— heavens, earth, light, darkness
- **day 2**— sky
- **day 3**— land, sea, plants, vegetation
- **day 4**—sun, moon, stars
- **day 5**—birds, sea animals
- **day 6**—land animals, mankind

notice how the second three days of creation correlate to the first three days: this is commonly referred to as *forming and filling*. **God first forms what he will then fill.** our God is meticulously intentional in all his works.

» *what did you notice as you read the creation story?*

» *how do you see God's intentionality in his creation—and in your own life?*

the biblical authors repeatedly make reference to God being creator. in doing so, they are affirming his power, his greatness, and his eternal sovereignty. **Lord over creation and Lord over all**, we serve a God who transcends both time and space, as well as our understanding.

- **job 38:4-11**
- **psalm 90:1-2**
- **isaiah 40:21-28**
- **isaiah 45:18**
- **jeremiah 32:17**
- **romans 1:20**

» *what comfort or assurance do you have when you consider God as creator of all?*

» *how have these verses increased your confidence in God's power and sovereignty?*

each of the first six days ends with the repeated refrain, “and there was evening and there was morning.” not so with the seventh day. on the seventh day of creation we are told that **God rested from his work**. not only did he rest from his work, he declared the seventh day holy—set apart from the other days.

he did not rest because he was tired or in need of a break; God rested as both a pattern and an invitation for us to cease from our work and rest in him. unlike the first six days, God never declares the end of the seventh day. **we are to rest in him daily** as we await our seventh day rest of eternal life with him.

» *do you regularly find rest in God? how might you practice continually abiding in him?*

» *have you ever thought of eternity with God as a continuation of the seventh day of creation?*

» *how does this impact how you view eternity?*

fall

every single thing that God created was absolutely perfect. there was no sickness or death or disaster or war, and adam and eve lived in unhindered intimacy with both God and each other. everything was perfectly good—but it didn't take long for perfection to be shattered by evil.

» **read genesis 3:1-15**

there is an enemy. satan was once an angel who desired to usurp God's authority and become like God. in righteousness and justice, God cast him out of heaven, and now satan lives with bloodthirsty disdain for God and his people—because they have been made in his image.

- **isaiah 14:12-15**
- **ezekiel 28:12-19**

- **luke 10:17-20**
- **revelation 12:9**

just as he desired to become like God, satan now prowls around echoing the lie that humankind can become like God as well. he has been destined to hell, and he is determined to bring as many people with him as possible.

in the garden of eden, satan came as a serpent to deceive adam and eve. although eve was already made in God's image, **satan led her to believe there was more godlikeness to be had**—that God was actually holding out on them.

their entire existence thus far had been lived in the presence of God's goodness; **they had never known evil**. but as the devil always does, he made evil look more appealing than obedience to God. eve, and adam along with her, took the bait. they ate the forbidden fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. **they disobeyed God**.

» *what lies of the enemy do you hear most frequently? which lies are you most tempted to believe?*

» *in what ways have you desired to be like God?*

in this one single act of disobedience to God, their relationship with both God and each other was fractured. **all of creation would now feel the effects of sin in the world**. death had entered into life's reality as a result of their first sin. all of humankind would now, for all generations, be marred with this sin nature.

humanity had fallen from perfect, intimate communion with their divine creator.

- **genesis 3:23-24**
- **isaiah 59:1-13**

- **hosea 6:6-7**
- **ephesians 2:1-3**

the fall ruined everything. God mercifully removed adam and eve from eden to prevent them from eating from the tree of life and, consequently, live in their sin forever. the garden of eden was now guarded by a flaming sword and cherubim with no hope for adam and eve to return—at least not on their own merit...

redemption

the effects of the fall spread to every corner of the earth. a gaping chasm now existed between the creator and his creation. as a result of the fall, **we became a race of people who are persistently against God**. the separation was so great and the sin so all-consuming that, left to ourselves, we could never again even desire relationship with God.

we could never save ourselves...

- **genesis 6:5**
- **ecclesiastes 9:3**
- **ephesians 2:12**
- **ephesians 4:18**

...we needed a redeemer.

God was not surprised by adam and eve's sin. he already had a plan for redemption in place. following their disobedience, clothed in their garments of shame, **they heard the first whisper of hope—the first glimpse of the gospel**. God declared that satan would not get the last word—there would be a son who would crush the head of the enemy.

"i will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

genesis 3:15 (NIV)

the entire old testament weaves together the story of God's people with the repeated promise that a day was coming when his son, the messiah, would make everything right and the people of God could once again be with God.

- **job 19:23-27**
- **micah 5:2-5**
- **isaiah 7:14**
- **isaiah 9:2-7**
- **daniel 7:13-14**
- **zechariah 9:9-10**

» *imagine being an old testament believer awaiting the fulfillment of God's promised son. how do you think this waiting might have impacted your faith?*

» *how does recognizing the complexity of their hope-filled longing encourage you right now as you wait on the Lord?*

- **habakkuk 2:3**
- **2 peter 3:9**

finally, after centuries of waiting—at long last—**the promised son was born**. Jesus, immanuel, had come in the flesh to be God with us and save us from our sins. Jesus lived the perfectly holy life we could never live and died the death that we deserved in order to make us right with God. he then rose from the dead so that we can be with God forever. he paid the penalty for our disobedience to God and set us free from slavery to sin.

he is our redeemer—and we are the redeemed.

- **leviticus 17:11**
- **isaiah 61:1-3**
- **john 8:34-36**
- **romans 6:3-23**
- **colossians 1:13-14**
- **hebrews 9:11-12**

if this were a map, there might be a star indicating *you are here*. the story of the bible is not over: we are still living in the time of redemption. **Christ is still redeeming his people**.

restoration

the world, as it was created, has been fractured and marred by the curse of sin. what God created in perfection, evil has broken. God created us for intimacy with him; sin shattered that relationship and brought with it death. Christ has redeemed his people from the clutches of darkness, **but for now he leaves us here to be his light** to those around us still enslaved to sin. in our in-between existence, we live with an ever-increasing awareness of the brokenness that surrounds us.

- **genesis 3:16-19**
- **romans 8:19-25**
- **2 corinthians 5:1-4**
- **2 timothy 3:1-7**

» *where do you see the effects of sin in your life and the world around you?*

» *in what ways do you feel the tension of living in the already-and-not-yet of your redemption?*

the darkness will not last. much like the old testament believers, we are journeying towards our promised land. one day Jesus will return and wipe away all darkness, and he will be for us our eternal light in the new jerusalem.

- **john 1:4-5**
- **john 14:2-3**
- **acts 1:6-11**
- **1 corinthians 15:50-58**
- **hebrews 11:13-16**
- **revelation 22:1-5**

it will not always be like this. the brokenness and sin and turmoil and pain all have an end date. **Jesus is coming back.** he has promised he will return for his own as a bridegroom for his bride. God has promised to dwell with his people for all eternity. in the restoration of all things, **the earth and everything in it will be made new.**

- **2 corinthians 5:17**
- **1 john 3:2**
- **revelation 19:1-16**
- **revelation 21:1-7, 22-25**

on that great day when Christ returns for his bride—the church—we will exhale into eternity, stand before our king in our glorified bodies, and see our savior face-to-face as we fall to our knees in worship. **come, Lord Jesus!** (revelation 22:20)

» *as you contemplate the hope of the new creation, what is the response of your heart and soul?*

» *how has reading about the story of scripture given you a greater understanding of the continuity of the whole bible?*

and i heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. he will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God."

revelation 21:3



loving him
& loving his.