

CHOOSING THE ONE THING
THAT MATTERS

*The Good
Portion*

WOMEN'S GUIDED
BIBLE STUDY JOURNAL

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First Edition

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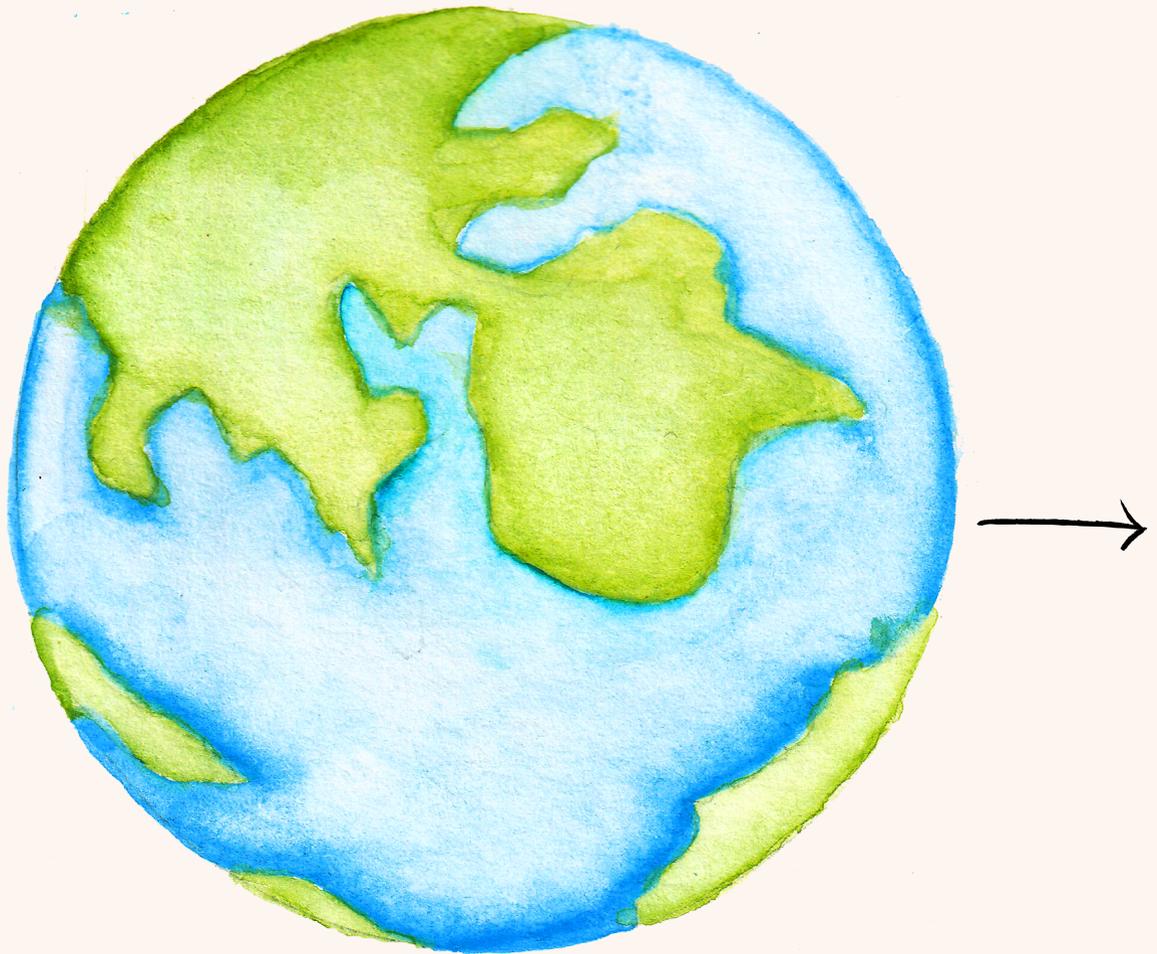
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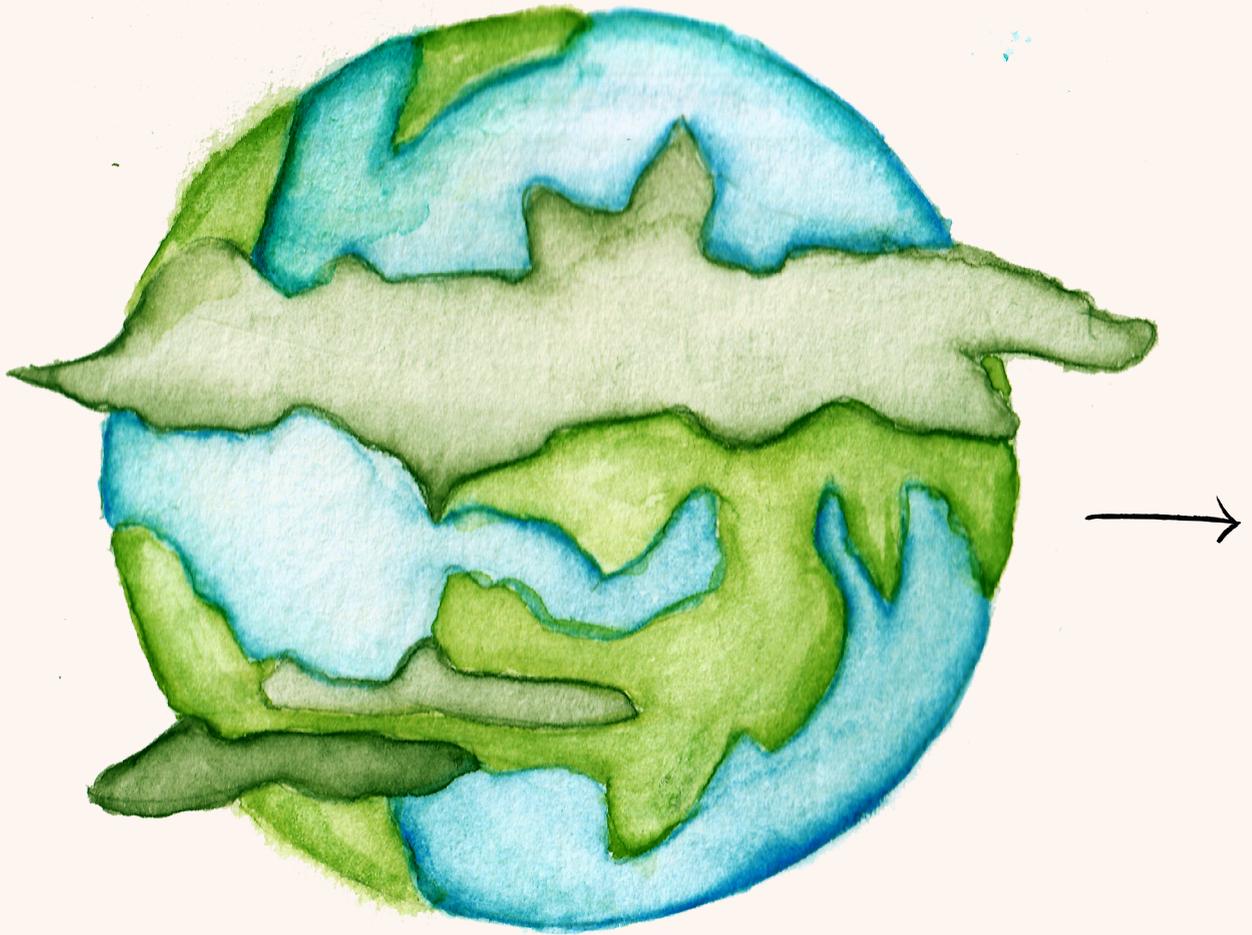
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Creation

GOD CREATED THE WORLD AND EVERYTHING IN IT, PROCLAIMING IT "GOOD" (GENESIS 1:31). HUMANS WERE SET APART AS THE "CROWNING GLORY OF THE CREATOR'S WORK — BEINGS MADE IN GOD'S OWN LIKENESS, WITH WHOM HE COULD COMMUNE, AND IN WHOM HE COULD DELIGHT, BEINGS WHO WOULD KNOW THE SHEER PLEASURE OF HIS PRESENCE, LOVE, AND FAVOR." (7) THE FIRST HUMANS LIVED IN PERFECT FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND WITH EACH OTHER IN A GARDEN OF PERFECT BEAUTY AND PERFECT PEACE.



Fall

HUMANS CHOSE TO REBEL AGAINST GOD, SEVERING THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM AND WITH EACH OTHER. HUMANS NOW LIVE AS SLAVES TO DISTORTED, SINFUL PASSIONS WHICH WILL NEVER SATISFY. OUR GREATEST EFFORTS TO OBTAIN RIGHTEOUSNESS AND FAVOR WITH GOD FALL SHORT. WE ARE LIKE "SHEEP" WHO HAVE "GONE ASTRAY," (ISAIAH 53:6) AND ARE DESERVING OF BOTH PHYSICAL AND ETERNAL DEATH, TRAGICALLY SEPARATED FROM OUR CREATOR.



Redemption —

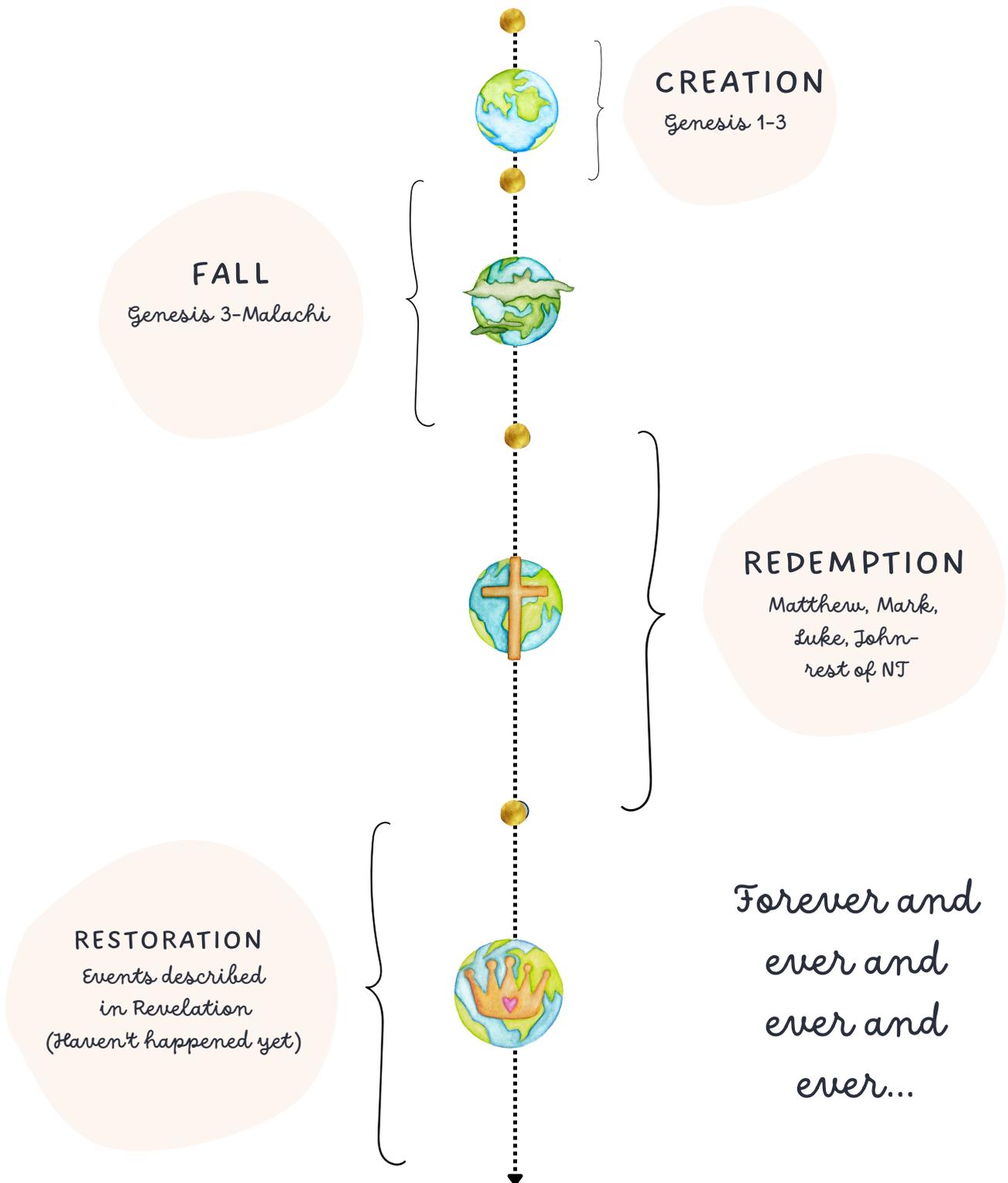
THOUGH OUR SINS HAVE CONDEMNED US AS WORTHY OF DEATH, GOD STILL LOVED US. "FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY SON, THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE" (JOHN 3:16). IN HIS GREAT MERCY, THE FATHER ENACTED THE GREATEST RESCUE PLAN OF ALL TIME — HE SENT CHRIST TO EARTH TO LIVE A SINLESS LIFE AND TO DIE AS A SACRIFICIAL ATONEMENT FOR OUR SINS. HUMANS CANNOT EARN THEIR WAY BACK TO GOD, BUT WHEN WE PLACE OUR FAITH IN CHRIST AND IN WHAT HE ACCOMPLISHED FOR US ON THE CROSS, WE CAN BE FORGIVEN AND MADE NEW. "BY HIS CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION [HE] MADE POSSIBLE OUR BEING RESTORED TO THE IMAGE OF GOD...AND THROUGH THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT BECAME PRESENT WITH US IN CONSTANT FELLOWSHIP."(8)



Restoration

THIS FINAL CHAPTER OF THE STORY HAS YET TO BE LIVED. ONE DAY CHRIST WILL RETURN TO TAKE HIS RIGHTFUL PLACE AS KING OF THE UNIVERSE. HE WILL CREATE A NEW HEAVEN, AND A NEW EARTH, ABOLISHING DEATH AND PAIN AND SIN FOREVER. HUMANS WILL ENJOY PERFECT FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND WITH EACH OTHER FOR ALL ETERNITY.

METANARRATIVE TIMELINE





Social Media

DETOX PLAN



SIMPLIFY INPUTS

-ARE YOU ACTIVE ON TWITTER, FACEBOOK, TIK TOK, INSTAGRAM ETC.? PICK ONE OR TWO. IT'S HARD TO BE INTENTIONAL ON SO MANY PLATFORMS. GO DEEP, NOT WIDE.

TAKE A MEDIA FAST

PICK ONE DAY A WEEK TO SILENCE ALL DEVICES. IF YOU WANT TO GO BIG, FAST FOR A WHOLE WEEK OR MORE.

CHOOSE REPLACEMENTS

-RESEARCH AND BUY SOME GOOD BOOKS. DOWNLOAD THE KINDLE APP.
-START YOUR DAY WITH THE "FIRST 5" APP OR THE "SHE READS TRUTH" APP TO START YOUR DAY WITH THE WORD

GIVE YOUR DEVICE A BEDTIME AND A WAKE-UP TIME

-RESERVE YOUR FIRST AND LAST HOURS FOR IN-PERSON INTERACTION AND TIME IN THE WORD. KIND OF LIKE INTERMITTENT FASTING, BUT WITH YOUR PHONE.

SET LIMITS

-FORCE YOURSELF TO SET A TIMER BEFORE OPENING AN APP, STICK WITH IT.
-CHOOSE TO WATCH ONLY THREE RANDOM VIDEOS A DAY





Social Media

MY PERSONALIZED DETOX PLAN

WRITE IT DOWN!!!!!!

HOW WILL YOU BE INTENTIONAL TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO FEED CHRIST TO OTHERS INSTEAD OF FEEDING YOURSELF USELESS INFORMATION?



How To Study Your Bible

Wooooooo!!!

Are you excited yet!?

My husband thinks I use the word, “Woooo” rather obsessively and likes to tease me about it. If there ever was a moment for “wooing,” this is it!!! Just picture me jumping up and down and pounding my fists in the air. You can join me in this imaginary party if you would like!

WOOOOOO!!

Sorry, can't help myself.

In this section, we will show you our design template for personal Bible study, and walk you through an example study.

Is this the only way you can study the Bible?

Absolutely not.

Do you have to do every single step we outline in the exact way we describe?

Nope.

Do we hope that this helps you find the rhythm that works for you and give you the tools you need to encounter Jesus for yourself in the secret place!?

Yes! Yes! And more yes!

Before we open our Bibles, I believe it is crucial to pause and take some time to posture our hearts before Heaven. You will find the first section in our journal template is entitled, “Pour it out.” This is where we take our “jars of perfume” – all the things that have been weighing heavy on our hearts, all the little distractions, the tug of the to-do list – and we choose to push pause and pour them out on the feet of Christ. You may have to do some physical as well as mental rearranging. Maybe you need to put your phone in another room, or go to a space where you're not going to be constantly distracted by clutter or things that need to be cleaned or organized. The temptation to exchange a small “good” thing for the “best” thing is real. If I am in a room that needs cleaning, it is very hard for my mind to relax and enjoy Jesus.

A few minutes ago, I stood up from the computer, grabbed my broom, and swept up a dirty spot without even realizing I had done it. *#mombrain* Maybe you need to go outside or sit by a window, so you can fix your eyes on the beauty of God's creation. Put yourself in the location that will best set you up for success.

Sometimes, finding the “perfect” spot won't be possible. You might be in your car during lunch break. You might be lying on the floor beside your child's crib with your head on a stuffed elephant and your feet on a pile of matchbox cars -- that's okay too. You don't have to be in the perfect place to meet Jesus. Remember, we serve a God who meets us wherever we are.

Come before Heaven and thank the Father for the unparalleled gift of being able to communicate with Him. Ask Him to open your eyes to the life-changing truths found in His Word.

Acknowledge your weakness and your need for Him to speak. If you are still dealing with mental clutter, stop and write it down in the “Pour It Out” section. Remember something you need to put on your grocery list? *Write it down*. Realize you need to shoot someone a text? Write it down so you won’t forget. If things pop into your mind throughout your study, you can continue to lay them down in the “Pour It Out” box. It’s a simple surrender that shows you are entrusting your life into the loving hands of the Father. He promises that when we seek Him first, He will take care of all the other little details of life (Matthew 6:33). The type of study we will be exploring is called “Inductive Bible Study” and is broken down into three sections--



Though the term, “inductive” may be new to you, it’s actually a process with which your mind is very familiar. Whether or not we are aware of it, the human mind moves through these three steps everyday to interpret and navigate through reality. We see what’s happening around us, understand what it means, and react appropriately.

EXAMPLE #1:

Observation: We see the traffic light turn red.

Interpretation: We understand that we are in danger of being hit by oncoming traffic.

Application: We lower our foot and hit the brake.

EXAMPLE #2:

Observation: We hear our infant crying.

Interpretation: We realize it’s been two hours since his last meal and our sweet baby is probably hungry.

Application: We feed him.

To give a simplified Biblical example, let’s go to the feeding of the five thousand found in Mark 14.

Observation: Jesus miraculously multiplies one child’s small lunch to feed a crowd of over five thousand people.

Interpretation: Jesus has power over the natural world and can use anything He wants to provide for His children.

Application: I should not fear because God will provide for me no matter how bleak the situation looks. He can take my little and turn it into a lot.

Though our minds flow through this progression naturally, it is crucial to break down and analyze each step when we are interpreting something as complex as a Biblical text.

Each step in the inductive process builds on the others. We must build a firm foundation of observation and interpretation if we hope to have a stable and accurate application.

STEP #1...OBSERVATION

When we observe Scripture, we are asking the basic question, “What is happening?”

As we learned in “See The Bigger Story,” it is crucial that we understand the context of a passage of Scripture if we are to truly apprehend God’s intended message. Though the books you were assigned to read in high school weren’t divinely inspired, some of the tactics you used to study great works of literature can and should be applied when studying your Bible.

Do these questions sound familiar?

WHO? WHAT? WHEN? WHERE? WHY? HOW?

You’re going to ask the “Bible” version of these questions in the observation portion. These questions are different when you are examining a book of the Bible than when you are examining a passage of Scripture within that book.

My sister is a speech pathologist. One of her strategies when working with younger children is to do a “book walk-through.” I love the mental image of walking through a book to get an overarching grasp of its content. Asking the “W’s” for books of the Bible is a great way to do this.

So let’s “walk through” Luke together.

Though you don’t have to write the answer to these questions down every time you crack open your Bible, it’s important that you have this information in the back of your mind as you approach the text.

You may already be an expert on Luke, but for example’s sake, let’s pretend you never heard of the guy.

Here’s a handy chart you can reference while doing your studies to help you remember the “5 W’s of Books”

Observation

THE 5 W'S OF BOOKS

WHO?

WHO WROTE THIS BOOK?
TO WHOM WAS IT WRITTEN?

WHAT?

IN WHAT STYLE WAS THIS
BOOK WRITTEN?

WHEN?

WHEN WAS THIS BOOK WRITTEN?
(IN CHRONOLOGICAL TERMS &
IN THE BIGGER STORY OF SCRIPTURE)

WHERE?

WHERE WAS THE ACTION
HAPPENING?

WHY?

WHY WAS THIS BOOK
WRITTEN?



Don't stress. If you have a study Bible, the answers to all of these questions should be found at the beginning of each book.

If you don't have a study Bible, there are tons of wonderful, free online resources that provide access to articles, books, and charts with this information. My go-to is *blueletterbible.org*, but there are dozens of others. We have included a resource list in the back of this book with some helpful suggestions on various tools you can use in your quest to increase your Biblical literacy. This list is by no means exhaustive, but we hope it will aid your search and connect you with the knowledge you need to grow.

Who—Who wrote Luke?

As you may have guessed, Luke was written by Luke. The author was a physician who traveled with the Apostle Paul. Luke is known for his attention to detail and has a reputation as a meticulous historian and intellectual. Interestingly, Luke was not Jewish and did not witness the events he recorded in the book firsthand. Instead, he writes his Gospel based on the testimony of eyewitness accounts.

What— In what style was Luke written?

Books of the Bible have historically been categorized into eight major genres. Understanding the style of each book is helpful in determining how best to interpret the text.

For instance -- you wouldn't want to interpret poetry as a historic event, or a historic event as a metaphor. Here are some reference charts to help explain each of the genres, and the books which fall into these categories.



Biblical Genres

Books

NARRATIVE

OLD TESTAMENT:

-GENESIS, EXODUS, NUMBERS,
DEUTERONOMY, JOSHUA,
JUDGES, RUTH, 1&2 SAMUEL,
1&2 KINGS, 1&2 CHRONICLES,
EZRA, NEHEMIAH, ESTHER,
PARTS OF JOB AND THE
PROPHETS

NEW TESTAMENT:

-MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE,
JOHN, ACTS

THE LAW

OLD TESTAMENT:

-LEVITICUS
-PARTS OF EXODUS,
NUMBERS,
& DEUTERONOMY

POETRY

OLD TESTAMENT:

-PSALMS
-SONG OF SOLOMON
-LAMENTATIONS
-PARTS OF OT
NARRATIVES

WISDOM

OLD TESTAMENT:

-PROVERBS
-JOB
-ECCLESIASTES

PROPHECY

OLD TESTAMENT:

MAJOR PROPHETS-
-ISAIAH, JEREMIAH, EZEKIEL,
DANIEL
MINOR PROPHETS-
-HOSEA, JOEL, AMOS,
OBADIAH,
JONAH, MICAH, NAHUM,
HABBAKUK, ZEPHANIAH,
HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH,
MALACHI

APOCALYPTIC

OLD TESTAMENT:

-PARTS OF ISAIAH,
JEREMIAH,
EZEKIEL, JOEL, DANIEL

NEW TESTAMENT:

-MATTHEW 24-25, MARK 13,
2 THESSALONIANS 2
-ALL OF REVELATION

GOSPELS

NEW TESTAMENT:

-MATTHEW
-MARK
-LUKE
-JOHN

EPISTLES

NEW TESTAMENT:

-ROMANS, 1&2 CORINTHIANS,
GALATIANS, EPHESIANS,
COLOSSIANS, 1&2
THESSALONIANS, 1&2
TIMOTHY, TITUS, PHILEMON,
1&2 PETER, JAMES, 1,2,&3
JOHN, JUDE, HEBREWS





Biblical Genres

Descriptions

NARRATIVE

- FACTUAL ACCOUNTS OF REAL EVENTS
- NOT TO BE UNDERSTOOD AS LEGEND OR FABLE
- THESE ARE STORIES ABOUT REAL PEOPLE ENCOUNTERING A REAL GOD

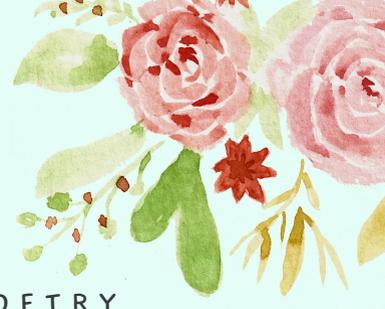
THE LAW

- LAWS GIVEN BY GOD TO THE NATION OF ISRAEL. PART OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HIS COVENANT WITH THEM AS HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE.

-3 TYPES OF LAW:

- MORAL
- CEREMONIAL
- JUDICIAL

POETRY



- HEBREW POETRY WHICH MAY INCLUDE METAPHOR, SYMBOLISM, PARALLEL STRUCTURE, AND EVEN PROPHECY.
- SOME POEMS WERE SONG LYRICS AND EVEN INCLUDE THE INSTRUMENTS WHICH WERE TO BE PLAYED

WISDOM

- PRACTICAL WISDOM GIVEN TO AID THE READER IN NAVIGATING SUCCESSFULLY THROUGH LIFE.

PROPHECY

- PROPHETS SERVED AS GOD'S MOUTHPIECE AND REVEALED MESSAGES, VISIONS, AND GLIMPSES INTO THE FUTURE.
- SOME PROPHECY IS EASY TO INTERPRET, OTHERS USE SYMBOLIC LANGUAGE

APOCALYPTIC

- THESE WRITINGS USE SYMBOLIC LANGUAGE TO DESCRIBE END-TIME EVENTS

GOSPELS

- HISTORICAL NARRATIVE WHICH RECORDS THE EVENTS OF CHRIST'S LIFE WHILE HE WAS ON EARTH.

EPISTLES

NEW TESTAMENT:

- ROMANS, 1&2 CORINTHIANS, GALATIANS, EPHESIANS, COLOSSIANS, 1&2 THESSALONIANS, 1&2 TIMOTHY, TITUS, PHILEMON, 1&2 PETER, JAMES, 1,2,&3 JOHN, JUDE, HEBREWS
- 
- 

When — When was Luke written? Where does it fall in the grander story of Scripture?

Around 62 AD, about 30 years after Jesus' death. If we look at the metanarrative of Scripture, we find that these events occur briefly before Christ bought our redemption on the cross.

Where — Where was the action in Luke happening?

The events in this book take place in Israel during the life of Christ.

Why — Why was Luke written?

Luke addressed this book to an unknown friend named Theophilus. Though he addressed his writing to a single person, it was meant to reach a broader audience.

Now that we've "walked through" Luke, let's get ready to dig into our text for today. Before we begin, here are the five W's to have in your mind as you read.

Observation

THE 5 W'S OF TEXT

WHO?

WHO ARE THE CHARACTERS IN
THIS PASSAGE? WHO IS SPEAKING?

WHAT?

WHAT HAPPENED IN THIS
PASSAGE?

WHEN?

WHEN IS THE ACTION OCCURRING?
BOTH WITHIN THE GRANDER STORY
AND WITHIN THE BOOK ITSELF?

WHERE?

WHERE IS THE ACTION
OCCURRING?

WHY/HOW?

(THESE ARE SAVED FOR
INTERPRETATION)

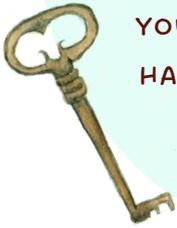


Not only do we want to read with our eyes primed for the answers to “W” questions, we want to be on the hunt for certain sorts of words and phrases that can help us better understand the passage.

It’s a lot of fun when you approach it like a treasure hunt!

Key Words & Phrases

- USED MULTIPLE TIMES
- ESSENTIAL TO THE MEANING OF THE TEXT
- ANYTHING THAT STRIKES YOUR CURIOSITY AND YOU HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT



Transitional Phrases

- THEREFORE, FINALLY, IN CONCLUSION, BECAUSE, SO, ETC..
- THESE PHRASES ARE BASICALLY SHOUTING, “PAY ATTENTION TO ME!”
- THIS IS WHERE THE “WHY” HAPPENS

Contrasts & Comparisons

- GOD IS LIKE, MAN IS LIKE
- RATHER, INSTEAD, BUT, WHEREAS



Expressions Of Time

- AFTER, A LITTLE WHILE, ETERNAL, BEFORE, FOREVER AND EVER



Some people like to go all out and use different colored highlighters to mark their key words and phrases. I am not personally that organized, but if you want to whip out your pencil pouch, you go right ahead!

Now that you know what you're looking for, why don't you whip out your Bibles and read our chosen portion, Luke 10:38-42, for yourself.

Let's go through what we've found in our "treasure hunt" together.

Who- Who are the characters in this passage?

Mary and Martha- Sisters who are personal friends with Christ. It appears that their house was a common stop for Jesus and His disciples when they traveled through the area.

Jesus- Creator of the universe. King of all Kings. Only Son of God. Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. My favorite Character of all time.

What- Jesus visits the house of Martha and Mary. While Martha is busy preparing dinner, Mary chooses to sit and listen to Jesus teach. This enrages Martha, who asks Jesus to command her to help in the kitchen. Jesus surprises Martha by refusing her request and explaining that Mary is the one who has chosen wisely.

When- This event occurred at the height of Christ's ministry. He was traveling, preaching, and performing miracles. By this point, He had gathered a large following as well as a host of enemies.

Where- At the house of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, in the little town of Bethany located on the outskirts of Jerusalem. Jesus would often stay there when visiting the Holy City.

KEY WORDS:

v.40 -"distracted"

v.42- "one thing is necessary"

v.42 -"the Good Portion"

NO TRANSITIONAL PHRASES OR EXPRESSIONS OF TIME

COMPARISON/CONTRASTS:

v.39-40 -"but, Martha was distracted with much serving."

v.41 -"But the Lord answered her..."

v.42 -"But one thing is necessary."

Keyword Research

It is not necessary to do additional research on all keywords. Occasionally, however, you may find a word that piques your curiosity. It's never been easier to do your own simple, yet fruitful word study. I typically use *blueletterbible.org* for help in this investigation. Simply choose the version of the Bible you are currently using, then type in your chosen passage.

Once you select "tools," you will have access to such resources as the Strong's definition of the term, an outline of its Biblical usage, a Greek Lexicon (which is basically a fancy term for a Greek dictionary), and a list of other places this phrase has been used in Scripture. Since we are English speakers, it can also be helpful to look up keywords in an English dictionary. The translators worked very hard to select words that would convey the original author's meaning. When we look at the English definition, we may actually gain a deeper understanding of the Greek definition.

My favorite thing to do with key words is to cross-reference their use in other parts of Scripture. Once we begin cross-referencing, we have officially crossed over into the "Interpretation" section.

WOOOOOOOOOOO!!! (You knew I had to do it.)

In our devotional template, we have lumped the Observation and Interpretation sections together. Many people, including myself, find that observation bleeds automatically into interpretation. For these people, physically separating the two processes on paper can actually be counterproductive. We want you to have the freedom to write as the Spirit moves. As you become more familiar with inductive study and find that your mind works better by separating the two ideas, please draw yourself a big fat line down the middle of the Observation/Interpretation box. Make it your own!

We have now officially circled back to our "Why" and our "How" questions.

WHY?

Why does this matter?

What does it mean?

We can answer the "Why" question by asking the "How" question.

HOW?

"How would the original hearers have understood this?"

Interpretation

CHEAT SHEET

WHY?

-WHY DOES THIS
MATTER?

HOW?

HOW WOULD THE ORIGINAL
RECIPIENTS HAVE
UNDERSTOOD THIS?

CROSS-REFERENCE

-WHERE HAVE SIMILAR THEMES OR
STORIES BEEN DISCUSSED ELSEWHERE IN
THE BIBLE?

-"LET SCRIPTURE INTERPRET SCRIPTURE."

TRANSLATION

-READ THE SAME PASSAGE IN
A DIFFERENT TRANSLATION

RESOURCES

-FOOTNOTES, COMMENTARIES,
REFERENCE BOOKS, ETC.

Tips For Interpretation

-USE SCRIPTURE TO INTERPRET SCRIPTURE.

-In your study Bible, you will notice tiny numbers or letters sprinkled throughout your text and throughout the margins. These will lead you to other instances in the Word where this same word or phrase has been used. Maybe this same story has been used in another Gospel, but with added detail. Maybe this is a direct fulfillment of prophecy. Maybe the author is quoting a Psalm. Cross-referencing is one of the best ways to discover a text's richest, fullest meaning.

-Remember -- *Scripture will never contradict Scripture.* A clear truth that you find in one place will never contradict a statement found elsewhere. This should keep us from basing our doctrine on a single, obscure, passage of Scripture. If scholars argue over the meaning of a Scripture, you probably shouldn't base your whole theology on it. Base your core beliefs on what is clear.

-INTERPRET LITERALLY-

Most of the time, the meaning of a passage of Scripture is clear and straightforward. You can get into big trouble looking for a hidden message in every verse. If there is another layer of meaning, it will become apparent through careful study. Obviously, there are some exceptions, like books of prophecy such as Revelation. This is why it's so important to be familiar with the genres of Scripture, and to interpret according to that style.

-RESOURCES-

Not all passages of Scripture will require additional cultural or historical background information in order to fully understand. If there is relevant information that might change the interpretation of the passage, it will normally be included in the footnotes section of your study Bible. I am extremely fascinated with Israeli culture, and I find that learning more about the world of the Bible gives so much texture and color to the Scripture as I'm reading it. The Word comes alive in a whole new way when we understand it through its proper cultural and historic lens. I have included some of my resources on this subject in the resource section at the back of this book.

My grandmother Martha was probably the "Mary-est" person I ever met. The rocking chair where she met with Jesus every morning is still seated by our big, bay window, and serves as a constant reminder of what's really important.

If you were to give this passage a cold read, without any contextual knowledge of the Bible, you might walk away thinking, "God doesn't want me to do house chores." This would be followed by great rejoicing! "YES!!! The Bible is the **BEST BOOK EVER!** *Why didn't I pick this up sooner!?*"

You would be correct in assuming the Bible is the best book ever, but we know from the rest of Scripture that serving others is a good and Godly thing to do. Selflessly serving other people and showing hospitality are some of our primary means of showing the world the reality of Christ. So, the question becomes, *what did Martha get wrong?*

We get a clue with our key words, "anxious," "worried," and "distracted."

Martha was so obsessed with preparing the perfect meal for Jesus that she began to panic in an unhealthy way. I can just imagine her angry stomps around the kitchen. Maybe she's slamming doors and pots loud enough for Mary to hear in the other room. I can feel her fury building as she fumes under her breath, "I can't believe she's left me here to do this all by myself!" Finally, Martha can stand it no longer. Assured of her righteous position, she calls in Jesus to support her just cause and scold her wayward sister.

Perhaps if Mary had been brushing off her work to do something like binge *Netflix* or play Instagram reels, Martha may have had a valid reason to be upset. Maybe if their Guest hadn't been the Messiah, Martha could have been justified in her anger.

However, Mary wasn't binging *Netflix* and this was no ordinary Visitor. How many people can say that they had the chance to host the Son of God for dinner?

In this once-in-the-history-of-humanity scenario, Mary had chosen to set aside her chores for a time and sit down with Jesus. Martha wasn't wrong to want to show amazing hospitality to Jesus.

She was wrong because of how she *valued* that act of service.

She was more worried about a table setting than the landscape of her heart.

She was more concerned about *feeding* Jesus than she was about being *fed by* Jesus.

Our serving becomes a distraction when it keeps us from doing the one thing that matters. God is more concerned about the condition of our hearts than the condition of our kitchen floors. So many of us make the daily choice to pursue good things, like clean floors, in the place of the "one thing that is necessary."

"It's not that Jesus didn't expect work to be done, meals to be made, and tables to be set; He simply called Martha to recognize opportunity for best in the midst of all that was good."(1)

Kitchen floors are going to get dirty again, the laundry is going to come unfolded again, that email inbox is going to get flooded again. The spiritual food Christ infuses into our souls when we choose to spend time with Him is the *one thing that cannot be taken away from us*. This doesn't mean we don't clean our floors. This simply means that if we have a choice between a clean floor, and a chance to sit and be with Jesus, *we make the choice to sit in the mess and be with Jesus*.

When I looked at this passage through the lens of the metanarrative of Scripture, I saw something I had never noticed before. In some ways, Mary and Martha serve as pictures of the Old and New covenant ways of relating to Christ.

We have Martha, diligently preparing a feast for Christ. Like any good Israeli housekeeper, she wants to impress her guests with this meal. Hospitality was one of the most important virtues in this culture. Martha's thinking, "After this is over, I want to find a 5-star review on Yelp, given by the Son of God." Martha was working *for* God, but she was doing it *without God's help*, which only caused frustration and disappointment. The same thing happens to His servants today when we try to work for Him without Him.

Then we have Mary, and she doesn't seem to be at all worried about impressing Christ. She's not trying to "accomplish" anything. She knows what she has to give on her own is not enough, so she's not trying to feed Jesus, *she's letting Jesus feed her*. She knows that the opportunity to learn from Christ is more valuable than any 5-star review, and that His teaching will empower her for *real, impactful* service.

When we look at Martha and Mary, we see the shift from Law to Grace.



Law vs. Grace

Martha

Mary

TRYING TO IMPRESS GOD

THE JOY OF KNOWING HIM

TRYING TO IMPRESS OTHERS

FREED FROM OTHERS' OPINIONS

FINDING SIGNIFICANCE IN HER
OWN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

THE JOY OF LIVING TO
HONOR GOD

SERVING GOD AS OUR DUTY

ENJOYING CHRIST AS OUR
HEART'S GREATEST
TREASURE



Maybe some of us are still living "trapped in the kitchen." We have received the grace of Christ, but we're still living to impress Him, rather than being *empowered by Him*.

This brings me back to Philippians 3, where Paul laments over the time he wasted attempting to impress God and impress men with his man-made righteousness (v. 8-9). He said all of his accolades were garbage compared to the joy of knowing Jesus. Paul found true joy for the first time when he threw his trophies in the trash and "let the dinner burn."

When we allow ourselves to pause from our "doing" and concentrate on our "becoming" by spending time in the Word, we will be better equipped to go back "to the kitchen" and serve others in a way that makes an eternal difference.

God doesn't call us to pause our work permanently. God-empowered work is *good work*. He saved us by grace for "good works which He has prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10). We won't be able to accomplish these pre-ordained tasks if we aren't continually feeding ourselves with the Living Word. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

When we pause from our productivity to feast on Scripture, we will actually become *more* productive.

"All work, no matter how needed and useful, becomes anxious toiling if not fueled by our most needed sustenance: rest in the Lord." (2) I find the strangest thing happens when I take time out to reorient myself in God's presence. When I seek Him first, the other duties in my life — like the 472 pairs of unmatched socks in my bedroom, the 200 tiny plastic figurines that have been dumped into the middle of the living room floor, the crumbs on the couch that seem to magically reappear the instant I turn around — somehow transform from tedious chores into opportunities.

I'm actually able to *thank* Him for this means of serving my family, and able to recognize that when I serve others, *I am actually serving Christ*. Tasks that seemed meaningless now have a clear and eternal purpose. It's only when I am steeped in the love of God, that I'm able to love others well.

When I have tasted and seen that He is good, I can savor Him in the serving.

If we never stop to sample the Good Portion, we'll live like Martha — hungry, angry, and blustering around life feeling sorry for ourselves.

If we learn to be Marys, and make feeding ourselves a priority, we can cook for others with a smile on our face and a skip in our step.

This brings us to the final part of Inductive study, the "Application."

How should this change the way I live?

Since we can only truly see ourselves through the lens of who God is, the first step in our application should be to ask, "What does this passage teach me about God?"(3) I rephrased it a little differently in our template, but the intent is the same.

"HOW IS JESUS MORE LOVELY TO ME AFTER READING THIS PASSAGE?"

I can think of a hundred ways Christ is more lovely to me after soaking in this Scripture, but perhaps most prominently, I am reminded that He is the *God who sees*. Keeping up a home can be an extremely lonely and life-draining affair. How kind of God to remind me that I am never really alone. How kind of Him to invite me to rest in the midst of my straining.

I really want you to answer this question on your own. Take some time to admire Jesus in all of His grace-giving glory. Feel the love in His eyes as He invites you into His inner circle, and beckons you to sit at His feet.

Sit and savor.

To apply what we've learned, Wilkin suggests we ask,
"How does this aspect of God's character change my view of self?"
"What should I do in response?"(4)

Tim Keller has five questions that I believe are beneficial in letting Scripture reach in and rearrange our lives.(5)

Based on the truth revealed in this passage...

- 1) How can I praise Him?
- 2) How can I confess my sins on the basis of this text?
- 3) If this is really true, what wrong behavior, what harmful emotions or false attitudes result when I forget this? Every problem is because you have forgotten something. What problems are you facing?
- 4) What should I be aspiring to on the basis of this text?
- 5) Why is God telling me this today?

You may not need to ask all of these questions; maybe the answer pops right out at you like a jack-in-the-box.

The application of this text is going to be a little different for each of us, but for me the call to action is pretty simple. If I'm going to accomplish one thing today, let it be that I spend time savoring the Good Portion.

Let it be that I spent real time in the Word of God.

This is a call to set aside a daily time to abandon all other pursuits and focus entirely on Jesus.

No phone.

No Netflix playing in the background.

Let the spaghetti-encrusted dishes soak a little longer.

Let the laundry get a little stinky.

Let the kids walk around with sticky, jelly faces, just for a little bit.

Leave that text unanswered.

That email unopened.

The only way I'm going to be able to run my race with confidence is if I first learn to *sit* at the feet of Jesus.

What do *you* need to do to make time for Jesus?

Maybe you're a teacher and you have to wait for that glorious lunch break where your classroom is amazingly silent.

Maybe you're a young mom like me, and you have to wait until you put the kids to bed, run to the bathroom, and lock the door. (Yes, it is naptime right now, and I am currently writing this in the bathroom.)

Do you watch two tv shows before you go to bed? Cut out one and replace it with Bible study.

Do you spend a half-hour in bed, scrolling mindlessly through your phone before you work up the courage to get out from under the covers? Replace your scanning of useless information with Bible study.

Time with Jesus is going to look different for everyone. I know the classic scenario for a quiet time is early in the morning before the kiddos arise.

I have a confession -- I cannot do a huge Bible study in the morning. I will fall dead asleep. If I try to sit down and write anything before noon, it will end with my head on the table. It's just how my body works.

It sounds ridiculous, but just as I know how my body functions best, you know how you work best. Find the way that works for you *right now*. When are you the sharpest and the least distracted? It might not be what works for you next week, but just do what you can, when you can.

We are going to end our study in the way we began --in prayer.

I didn't make the prayer section exceptionally long because I don't want you to feel like your prayers need to stay on the page. Prayer is meant to be less of a once-and-done conversation, and more of a language we speak all day.

Just like we may feel the pressure to make our Scriptural observations eloquent and academic, we may assume our prayers need to be full of lots of frilly language if they're going to count.

This is NOT true.

Jesus says the kind of prayers He likes to hear are humble and authentic. You can't cover up the condition of your heart with an impressive-sounding prayer. Christ criticized the scribes of His day for trying to cover up their unloving behavior with, "long prayers" (Luke 20:46-47).

You also don't need a formula to pray; He doesn't want our conversations with Him to be scripted. For those of us who are easily distracted, however, using an acronym like PART can be helpful in guiding your prayers and in keeping your mind from wandering. (6)



Part Prayer

P.

PRAISE: GLORIFY GOD FOR WHO HE IS AND
WHAT HE HAS DONE

A.

ADMIT: CONFESS TO GOD WHERE YOU HAVE
FALLEN SHORT

R.

REQUEST: ASK GOD TO FORGIVE YOUR SIN AND
TO MEET YOUR NEEDS

T.

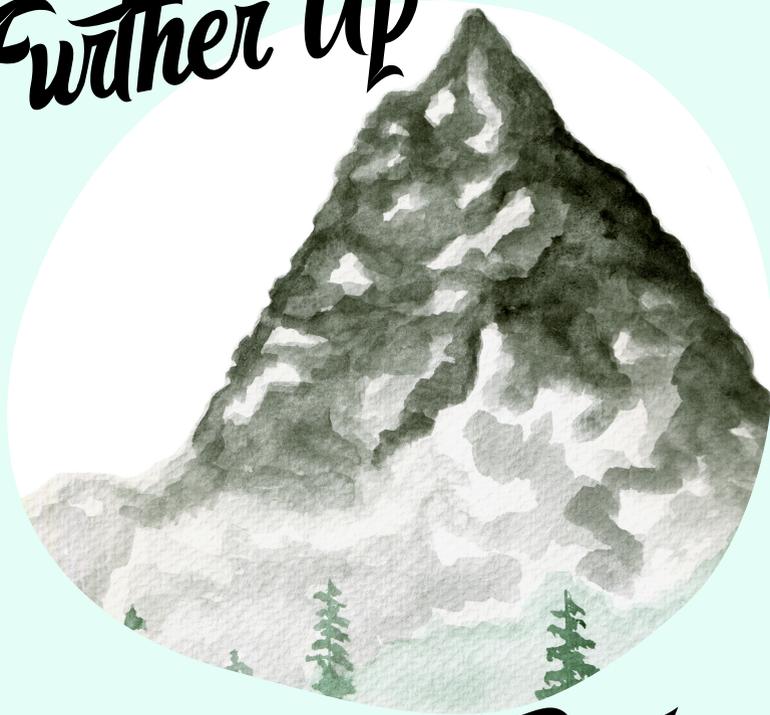
THANK: GIVE THANKS TO GOD FOR WHO HE IS
AND WHAT HE HAS DONE



THE WALLS OF HEART

THE WALLS OF HEART

Further Up



& Further In

-C. S. LEWIS



Bible Study
Journal Pages



Scripture:

Date: / /
.....

POUR IT OUT

OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION



HOW IS JESUS MORE LOVELY TO ME?



APPLICATION

PRAYER

Abide

REFLECTION



Scripture:

Date: / /
.....

POUR IT OUT

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APPLICATION

PRAYER

Abide

REFLECTION





Above all
else
guard your
♥
for it is
the
wellspring
of life. 4:23
Proverbs







Recommended Resources



MORE TIPS ON PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY :

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METANARRATIVE/CULTURAL & HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

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Also available as a free podcast on major podcast platforms.

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FREE ONLINE BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

Blue Letter Bible. Available at www.blueletterbible.org

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BIBLE READING PLANS/APPS:

Erike Kirk Biblein365.com

Biblein365 is also available as an app on most appstores

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KATHY, NOT ONLY DO YOU HAVE MAD GRAMMAR SKILLS, YOU HAVE BEEN THE HANDS AND FEET OF CHRIST TO ME FOR YEARS. WITHOUT THE STEADFASTNESS OF YOUR PRAYERS AND ENCOURAGEMENT, THIS BOOK NEVER WOULD HAVE ENTERED MY MIND. THANKYOU! THANKYOU! THANK YOU!! FOR THE HOURS YOU LABORED IN GENTLY CORRECTING MY MANY ERRORS, AND FOR YOUR DEEPER CONCERN FOR THE CONDITION OF MY HEART. I LOVE YOU!

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KYLE, THANK YOU FOR PUTTING GUP WITH THE EVER-INCREASING PILES OF LAUNDRY AS I SACRIFICED MATCHED SOCKS TO WRITE THIS BOOK. YOU ARE A WONDERFUL HUSBAND, FATHER, AND THE INSPIRATION FOR SO MUCH OF THIS BOOK. LOVE YOU FOREVER!

TO MY *LAUNCH TEAM*, I AM NOT QUITE SURE HOW I BECAME SO BLESSED WITH SO MANY WONDERFUL SISTERS IN CHRIST. I HAVE BEEN BLOWN AWAY BY YOUR SUPPORT, YOUR ENTHUSIASM, AND YOUR WILLINGNESS TO COME ALONGSIDE ME IN THIS WORK. YOUR IDEAS ARE BRILLIANT, AND YOUR ENCOURAGEMENT HAS KEPT ME GOING. I OWE ALL OF YOU MORE THAN I WILL EVER BE ABLE TO REPAY!

GRANDPAP, THANK YOU FOR NOT COMPLAINING ABOUT MY PILES OF REFERENCE BOOKS ON THE DINING ROOM TABLE, AND MY PROJECTOR SET UP IN YOUR FAVORITE CHAIR. YOUR ENCOURAGEMENT HELPED ME TO PUSH HARD TOWARDS THE GOAL! I LOVE YOU SO MUCH!

DAD, THANK YOU FOR THE PRAYERS WHICH HAVE SUPPORTED AND STRUCTURED MY LIFE FROM THE MOMENT I WAS BORN. I DON'T KNOW WHO I WOULD BE WITHOUT THE CONSTANT COVERING OF YOUR INTERCESSION. THANK YOU FOR YOUR FAITHFUL LOVE I LOVE YOU!