



# RE<sup>△</sup>RIENT

FINDING OURSELVES IN THE STORY OF GOD

FOUNDATIONAL STEPS TOWARD WALKING OUT  
GOSPEL FLUENCY IN COMMUNITY



# Reorient: Finding Our Place in the Story of God

Foundational steps toward walking out gospel fluency in community

Tim and Laurie Thornton

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Version 1.2



## PLEASE PRINT A COPY

We highly recommend working from a printed version of this study because it helps you fully process each chapter through writing, underlining, drawing, dog-earring pages, and staring at blank spots which will beg for completion. Your local print shop should be able to print and bind one nicely.

## REORIENT IS NOW A GIFT

With version 1.1 we charged \$10 for each Reorient study and each download came with the right to print one copy for yourself. With this update we have now made the study a free resource. If you wish to thank us for the study with a donation you can do so at [timandlaurie.org/partners](http://timandlaurie.org/partners)

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

We're Tim and Laurie Thornton. We are a husband and wife team with a decade-long history in music ministry, missions, discipleship, and equipping believers through unique retreats and ongoing training environments. Our desire is to facilitate moments of encounter with God that will awaken people to his love and grace, that they will take hold of their identity and joyfully live out their purpose in him. We work to empower God's people as they seek the kingdom and live into their destiny as a worshiping family that makes disciples and extends the dominion of God wherever they go. Currently we are shepherding a local church of multiplying missional communities in Colorado Springs called Kindred Collective.

Connect with us at: <http://timandlaurie.org>.

## HOW TO ENGAGE THIS STUDY

This study was born out of the desire for every person in our church to be confident not only in proclaiming the gospel but also in applying gospel foundations to their own lives. After a few rounds of use and refinement, it has become a catechetical resource for our community—for both new and seasoned believers—that rehearses the core gospel/story of God, establishes foundations for how we begin to live into the way of Jesus as a community, and introduces and explains the significance of sacraments like the Lord's supper and baptism.

### 1. Gather Your People

This study is meant to be experienced in community, preferably among those you have been called to share life with for a season. Most of the Bible was written not to individuals but to families of faith. By reading, praying into, and living out the scripture together, you are entering into an ancient and holy practice. Here are some (not as ancient and holy) pro tips:

- We've done this in groups as large as 12-15, but we think it works best in groups of 3-5.

- Do the readings and personal reflections on your own to prepare for the group study. In most cases, preparation for group discussion will take 1-2 hours. When you get together it's best to set aside 90 minutes to 2 hours per week for discussion and prayer.
- Designate a leader or leaders and give them permission to keep the discussion on track, challenge you, and have a discerning heart toward prayer needs that arise throughout the study. Leaders can look on the resource page at [timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) for a special facilitator's guide that will help them shepherd the group through the study.
- It's not business, it's personal. This study is designed to help us, real actual people with names and stories and destinies, live in the context of the true story, the one we share and which God is telling. Don't let it remain a hypothetical philosophy discussion. Let it get personal. Be patient with one another, pray for one another, and challenge one another.

## 2. Gather Your Tools

- A printed version of this study. Simply reading the material and having a light discussion won't produce the transformation that's possible through a deeper engagement with this process.
- A Bible, notebook, and pen. You may wish to take notes outside of the study book as well.
- There are a few books we draw upon throughout this study. We'll provide links to the excerpts you need but you may want print versions of them as well. Find them on the resource page at: [timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) password: thywordisalamp

## 3. Gather Your Courage

Finally, do not be surprised if reading the scripture in community makes you uncomfortable; it is to be expected that it would create a crisis for you because Jesus—who loves us better than anyone—also said “I have not come to bring peace, but a sword” (Matthew 10:34). Hebrews tells us the word of God is “sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

The Bible creates a great divide for us: Are we going to align ourselves with God's revelation of himself and allow the Spirit and the word do their work in us? Or are we going attempt to make scripture bow to our own understandings and sensibilities? Learning not to resist the truth, but to lean into the discomfort it causes, ultimately allows the truth to set us free. Here's how:

Repent! This should be among the most delightful words in the Christian's vocabulary. The kindness of God leads us to repentance and we repent and return to the person of God so that our “sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19). Sounds like a pretty good deal. Repent literally means to change our mind or turn around.

It's best done by (1) breaking with an old mindset or practice and (2) embracing a new one in which we invite—this is the return part—God to be with us, work through us, and empower our fruitful walking out of the new way by the power of his Spirit. It's a good idea to do this out loud in your group because often when one person repents it can lead the whole group back to Jesus in that area, and you can later remind each other to walk in that victory.

# HOW TO ENGAGE EACH SESSION

The end goal of this study is not an ascent to knowledge alone. Our goal is to be transformed by the word and the Spirit in community. As we grow in our understanding of our true story and better live into it, we'll be able to more joyfully partner with the Living God to help our hurting and dying world start to look more and more like his glorious kingdom.

## 1. Session Introduction

These small introductions are intended to provide the necessary bridges as we journey together from one session to the next. We had to skip so much in order to include key gospel elements and foundational ways to walk it out, while still making the study's completion possible within a semester. However, both the scriptures and church history endorse the idea of powerful proclamations of the gospel in amazingly short distillations, as well as longer catechetical processes. If, at the end of these sessions, you're looking to further augment your understanding of the story of God, the resource page has links to other materials that will aid you in filling in what is lacking.

Each session begins with a quote. While we don't wish to decontextualize the quotes, excerpts, songs, books, articles, or other media that we may have included in this study, please know that we also do not include them as an endorsement of every facet of the theology or lifestyle of their creators. Enjoy!

## 2. Enter with Worship and Prayer

"The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit." - 1 Corinthians 2:14 (NLT)

"[I pray] that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe." - Ephesians 1:17-19

"Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name." - Psalm 100:4

The rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel said that God "is not something to be sought in the darkness with the light of reason. He *is* the light." It's so crucial that we guard ourselves from entering into Bible study with a mindset that we can rely solely on human intellect to discover (or even worse, to stand in judgement of) the Living God.

Rather, we enter into his presence through praise and thanksgiving, believing that we are welcome, like long-awaited guests, and that God himself is willing and able to guide our study toward a true knowledge of him. Thanksgiving, praise and worship open our hearts to the presence of the person of God.

To help with this, the resource page at [timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) (password: thywordisalamp) includes links to some of our favorite worship songs relative to the content of each specific section. We suggest you turn them on, close your eyes, listen to the words, and let them wash over you as you become aware of God's presence and allow him to prepare your spirit, heart, and mind. Even if your time to do so is limited, this is a wonderful practice.

Next, you'll find a prayer adapted from the Ephesians passage above printed at the beginning of each session. One amazing thing about praying the scripture is that we already know it is approved and effective. We suggest you pray the prayer over yourself with faith, and when you gather together you may wish to pray it out loud in unison or take turns praying it over the group. Don't shy away from the repetitive nature of this as something rote; instead come repeatedly to prayer like you drink repeatedly from a spring or eat your favorite food repeatedly, allowing the Spirit to reveal deeper dimensions and nuances to you.

Don't neglect prayer and worship when you gather as a group. Our experience, perhaps unsurprisingly, has been that discussions which we began with worship and prayer tended to have a more holistic engagement and carried a sense that we were actually with God. Whereas when we neglected to slow down and engage as thankful worshippers and believing pray-ers, these sessions slipped more easily into human-minded discussion about a God mistakenly intuited as far away.

### 3. Study the Scriptures

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth." - 2 Timothy 2:15

In each session you'll find key and sometimes supporting passages as well as a space to write the main point of the passage(s) in your own words. Use an outline, drawing, or whatever helps you grasp and record the primary meaning of the text.

### 4. Review Additional Resources

"Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John; and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately." (Acts 18:24-26)

Even—and perhaps especially—the most eloquent and mightiest among us need additional voices to expand on and clarify the scriptures so we will continually understand the way more accurately.

On the online resource page, you will find several additional resources intended to expand and further inform your spirit-breathed study of each session. These resources range from videos to podcasts to excerpts from books. You'll be given a space to refine and expand your notes after consulting these resources.



## 5. Engage in Prayerful Discussion

Jesus, the true rabbi, often taught by asking questions. "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?" "The baptism of John was from what source, from heaven or from men?" "And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?" The book of Acts records Paul repeatedly "reasoning" in the synagogues and in greek learning environments.

Bring your questions and insights from personal reflection to the table, remembering to "give preference to one another with honor." (Romans 12:10) Seek the truth that God may want to bring to your group through others. Rather than an environment in which you flaunt your best personal insights or blow up the discussion as a "devil's advocate", offer your best insights to help cultivate an environment in which you will know the truth and be set free by it (John 8:32) and experience a wonderful transformation that results from seeking the Spirit and the word as a community (2 Cor 3:18) that is building itself up in love (Ephesians 4:16).

As much as possible in your discussion, answer questions directly from the scriptures, and cite specific verses and places within the scriptures where you draw from a concept. This will give you a place to stand and will give your revelations authority for others.

## 6. Respond in Prayer

"Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."  
- Mark 11:24

Unfortunately, it is far too easy to plumb the depths of the mystery and uncover any number of life-changing truths and forget them on the table like boxed up restaurant leftovers later discarded by the table busser. Believing prayer helps us to cultivate the truth in our hearts. In each session we offer some prayers of response to the scriptures and the story thus far. They are meant to be prayed together, but are written in the first person because it's important for each individual to come into agreement with God for himself or herself. Of course, you may wish to use these as a launching point, or to pray in a different way altogether, depending on the Spirit's leading in your own environment.

## 7. Do the Word

For the disciple of Jesus, learning is not simply knowing, nor is it even carrying the truth in our hearts, but also testifying to the truth with the way we live our lives. Jesus said, "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine *and acts on them*, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock."  
(Matthew 7:24, emphasis ours)

After prayer, take some time to agree upon and write down the most important and imminent practical steps that will make the Word tangible to your lives with God's help. Then support and follow up with one another, celebrating victories and bearing one another's burdens in the trials.



## SESSION LIST

- 1 Seeking the Truth of the Eternal Story
  - 2 The Heart and Plan of the Father
  - 3 Creation and the Purpose of Man and Woman
  - 4 God's Enemy and Humanity's Betrayal
  - 5 The Covenants, the Prophets, and the Promise
  - 6 The Gospel of the Kingdom and the Life of Jesus
  - 7 Behold the Lamb of God
  - 8 Dead to Sin, Alive in Christ
  - 9 The Greater Law and Our Adoption
  - 10 The Holy Spirit: We Have a Helper
  - 11 The Gift of Faith
  - 12 Becoming a Disciple
  - 13 Forgiving, Blessing, and Seeing
  - 14 Life in the Family of God
  - 15 The Kingdom Family on Mission
  - 16 Christ Will Come Again
- Project: Write Your Personal Confession of Faith



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# SESSION 1: SEEKING THE TRUTH OF THE ETERNAL STORY

**I wonder what sort of a tale we've fallen into?**

**- J. R. R. Tolkien**

As we launch into an immersion into the story of God and take our first foundational steps toward living into it together, we must take some time to talk about the Bible and how we ought to approach it in the context of kingdom family life. The goal of this study is to gain fluency in the metanarrative of the scripture—the overarching story of God and his love affair with human beings—not only to understand it, but to be transformed by it as well, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Just as God made the world with his spoken word in Genesis, we want to allow his word to make us and remake us in his image.

Although to some the “truth” is either determined by one’s own preference and experience or is essentially nonexistent, the Bible’s authors are not shy to call their teaching “the word of truth,” and the Apostle Paul claims that the gospel is the one story that will change our lives forever: “I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for the salvation to those who believe” (Romans 1:16). Whether we are new believers in Christ or we have believed for years, we do well to reorient ourselves to the Bible for what it claims to be: the plumbline of truth and a word which God will confirm powerfully as we submit ourselves to it.

The scriptures are meant to be understood. This may seem like an obvious statement, but it’s also one that many of us have considered too little. “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path” as the old song from Psalm 119 goes. The Bible is by nature an act of communication. And so we find that in a lot of the scriptures it is actually relatively easy to discern the author’s intended primary meaning. Undoubtedly, however, there are some passages that are difficult to interpret—several are notoriously so. As a result, you will need some tools for approaching the scriptures, in addition to the right position of heart to find your place inside God’s glorious story. These are what the first session is designed to help you acquire.

## Enter with Worship and Prayer

**Find songs for this session at: [timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) password: **thywordisalamp****

*God of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of Glory, thank you for giving me your Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of you. I pray that the eyes of my heart may be enlightened, so that I will know what is the hope of your calling, what are the riches of the glory of your inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of your power toward us who believe.*

# Study the Scriptures

**Write the main point of the passage(s) in your own words. Use an outline, drawing, or whatever helps you grasp and record the primary meaning of the text.**

**Key Passages:**

2 Timothy 2:14-17; 3:14-17; 4:2-4  
2 Peter 1:20-21; 3:14-18

**Supporting Passages:**

Deuteronomy 6  
Matthew 4:1-11  
Luke 24:44-45  
John 16:13-15

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# Review Additional Resources

**Refine and expand your scriptural reflection after consulting the resources for this session at:  
[timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) password: thywordisalamp**

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## Engage in Prayerful Discussion

1. What does Deuteronomy 6 tell us about the expectation of what we do with God's word?
2. What do the passages from Matthew and Luke reveal to us about Jesus' view of and relationship to the scriptures? What are the implications of Luke 24:45?
3. What does it mean to be an approved workman? What would be the danger of failing to accurately handle the word? Of bringing our own interpretation apart from God?
4. Why is it important to understand the meaning of a passage in context before applying it to your life? What could be some of the implications of not doing that?

Discussion Notes:

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## Respond in Prayer

*Father, I love you. I want to know your plan; I want to see you revealed in the scripture. I want to know who you are, what you do and why you do it. I want to learn the history, the legacy of those who have gone before me, and I want to anticipate how the story ends and to know my place in it. I dedicate these next few months of scripture immersion to you, for the purpose of coming to your word with humility and a heart to learn and obey. I submit myself, my knowledge, my understanding to yours. I invite you, Holy Spirit, to read the scriptures with me and reveal all truth to me. I invite you to press on me, to convict me, to address me with a truth that is far higher and far more good than what I could devise for myself. I will come ready to repent and to come into alignment with what you are already doing, rather than expect you to align with my lesser will. Thank you for your presence, thank you for your heart that longs to be close to me through your written word and thank you for Jesus, who is the fulfillment of all. Amen.*

## Do the Word

**Design an application for your life and process the outworking of it in community.**

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## SESSION 2: THE HEART AND PLAN OF THE FATHER

**This is and has been the Father's work from the beginning—to bring us into the home of his heart.  
- George MacDonald**

In order to truly understand the story of God we must understand that, like all good stories, it is at its core a love story, but this one is told by an Author who means to be a part of it. The triune God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—is love. God himself is a family—distinct in unity; dynamic in relationship. Three in one and one in three. And so love is the oldest and truest thing about the universe. However it has been defined, displayed, counterfeited, assaulted, pursued, spurned, and prized, love remains the core need of every person and the core truth about what it means to be human. To forsake love is to forsake our very selves, to our great detriment. To embrace it is to discover our glory, which we learn is not an isolated glory, but as we discover the fullness of love, communion with the Author himself: “God is love” (1 John 4:8).

Our belief about God and his love is at the root of most, if not all, of the problems we face. What you believe about God and his intentions toward you determines how much you are willing to trust him and whether you are able to stake your life on him. If you allow the enemy to constantly call into question God’s love for you, then how will you ever be able to walk in the victory he has won for you? In this session, we look to the scriptures to better understand the loving Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and to learn how the love of God in Christ was woven into the basic fabric of the universe, the story he has been telling since the beginning of time, and that he will tell through eternity.

### Enter with Worship and Prayer

**Find songs for this session at: [timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) password: **thywordisalamp****

*God of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of Glory, thank you for giving me your Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of you. I pray that the eyes of my heart may be enlightened, so that I will know what is the hope of your calling, what are the riches of the glory of your inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of your power toward us who believe.*



# Study the Scriptures

Write the main point of the passage(s) in your own words. Use an outline, drawing, or whatever helps you grasp and record the primary meaning of the text.

**Key Passage:**  
Ephesians 1-2

**Supporting Passages:**  
Colossians 1  
John 1:1-17

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# Review Additional Resources

Refine and expand your scriptural reflection after consulting the resources for this session at:  
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## Engage in Prayerful Discussion

1. Drawing from the above scriptures, make a list of what God the Father is like and what he wants. Be sure to include specific references to back up each of your claims.
2. According to these passages, what was happening before the creation of the earth?
3. Ephesians 1 and Colossians 1 refer to “the mystery of his will” and “his kind intention.” Using the passages as a guide, write your best statement of the original purpose and intention of the Trinity before the creation of the earth.
4. How does the Bible describe humans apart from Christ’s redemptive work? How does he see us through the work of Jesus and what role do we play in his plan as a part of his church/body?
5. Is the perspective proclaimed in these scriptures challenging to you? What would need to change for you to live in light of these truths?

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## Respond in Prayer

*Father, thank you that before you even created oceans and rocks and trees and sky, you had initiated a plan for intimate relationship with me, to love me and to give me a role in the revealing of your glory to all creation. I ask now that any need I may carry to prove myself to you, to strive to enter your favor, or to find life apart from you would disappear into a new and ever-increasing revelation of your kindness, love, and strength to accomplish all that you set yourself forth to do. Help me graciously receive my identity as a son in the beloved son Jesus Christ, as a citizen of your kingdom, and as a living stone in your temple. Reveal to me where I have misjudged your character so that I may repent and come into the fullness of intimacy with you and your purposes for me. Thank you that you are you. Thank you that you are the righteous judge. Thank you that you are the fulfiller of promises. Thank you that from the beginning, you initiated all of this because of your love and your desire for intimacy and relationship with me. Thank you for your plans. Thank you that you will not leave your purposes unaccomplished. Amen.*

## Do the Word

**Design an application for your life and process the outworking of it in community.**

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## SESSION 3: CREATION AND THE PURPOSE OF MAN AND WOMAN

**God's dream is...to have mankind as a partner in the drama of continuous creation. By whatever we do...we either advance or obstruct the drama of redemption; we either reduce or enhance the power of evil.**

**- Abraham Joshua Heschel**

In the last session's readings, we see God setting us apart for intimacy with him since before the foundation of the world and supplying us with every spiritual blessing, we see him as the creator and sustainer of all, the one who transfers us from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light, and the one who has made us in his image and commissioned us to establish his domain—his kingdom—on the earth.

Isaiah 46:10 tells us that we can know the end since the beginning, so now we look to Genesis as a window that further illuminates the ultimate purpose of God's heart, how it plays out in the story of humanity, and how it hints at what is to come at the renewal of all things. In this session, we see unbroken intimacy, a heavenly assignment for family, and a righteous judgement that all leads up to a beautiful foretaste of the Father's endgame.

### Enter with Worship and Prayer

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*God of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of Glory, thank you for giving me your Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of you. I pray that the eyes of my heart may be enlightened, so that I will know what is the hope of your calling, what are the riches of the glory of your inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of your power toward us who believe.*

## Study the Scriptures

Write the main point of the passage(s) in your own words. Use an outline, drawing, or whatever helps you grasp and record the primary meaning of the text.

### Key Passage:

Genesis 1-2

A large grid of dots for writing notes.

## Review Additional Resources

Refine and expand your scriptural reflection after consulting the resources for this session at:  
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A large grid of dots for writing notes.

## Engage in Prayerful Discussion

1. What threads can you trace between Genesis 1 and 2 and the pre-creation account as presented in Ephesians 1-2 and Colossians 1? What do these threads reveal to you about what God is like and what his desire and hope for creation is?
2. What differences are there between the creation and assignment of Adam and Eve in Genesis 1-2 and the creation and assignment of the other animals?
3. Describe God's relationship with Adam and Eve. Describe Adam and Eve's relationship to each other. How does the fulfillment of their assignment from God rely on their relationship with one another?
4. What is God's righteous declaration over his creation? What is his declaration over humans?
5. What is the significance of placing the trees in the Garden of Eden?
6. What are the implications of the creation story for you? For your community? For the earth?

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## Respond in Prayer

*God, you are the ultimate lover! You created me for intimacy with you, you created me on purpose and with a purpose, to partner with you in friendship and intimacy and rule and reign as your image-bearer! Hallelujah that I am not an accident! Hallelujah that I have a destiny! I repent for living as if I did not have a destiny, and for not taking up my assignment with joy and thanksgiving. Thank you for providing for my every need. Thank you for your everlasting and faithful love. Thank you that I was made for family. Thank you that I was created to participate in the intimate fellowship with you, Jesus and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.*

## Do the Word

**Design an application for your life and process the outworking of it in community.**

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## SESSION 4: GOD'S ENEMY AND HUMANITY'S BETRAYAL

**Remember this. When people choose to withdraw far from a fire, the fire continues to give warmth, but they grow cold. When people choose to withdraw far from light, the light continues to be bright in itself but they are in darkness. This is also the case when people withdraw from God.**

**- Saint Augustine**

So a holy and loving God created humans in his image/likeness, declared them to be very good, and granted them authority over all creation to rule and to reign as his representative partners and heirs who would establish the family of God and expand his dominion across the earth.

In this session, we will see how an enemy of God shows up in the form of a serpent and introduces a different story. The snake seems to know that if he can get Adam and Eve to apply their God-given authority in submission to his narrative, he can disrupt their intimacy with God, distort the image of God that they bear, wreak destruction on their garden, and seize their kingdom.

The enemy is still at work today, but as the apostle Paul said, “we are not unaware” of his schemes (2 Corinthians 2:11). Taking a closer look at the story of humanity’s separation from God and its fallout in our relationships with each other will help us in our own discernment. We will be better able to recognize how the enemy has planted the seeds of orphanhood and slavery in our own hearts, how they have born the fruit of rebellion and vain religion, where we have lived inside Adam’s legacy, where we have agreed with a faulty story, and how we can repent, put our belief where it belongs, and be restored to perfect intimacy and sonship with the Father and to right relationship with each other.

### Enter with Worship and Prayer

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## Study the Scriptures

Write the main point of the passage(s) in your own words. Use an outline, drawing, or whatever helps you grasp and record the primary meaning of the text.

**Key Passage:**  
Genesis 3

**Supporting Passage:**  
2 Corinthians 2:11

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## Engage in Prayerful Discussion

1. What was the snake's strategy in convincing Eve to eat the fruit? What does the serpent's narrative/interpretation bring into question for Eve?
2. What are the consequences of Adam and Eve's agreement with the serpent? In other words, what happens to their relationship with God? Their relationship with others? With earth?
3. In the midst of the aftermath of Adam and Eve's choice, there are a few provisions God makes for Adam and Eve. What are they? What is the significance of each of these provisions?
4. Do you recognize any of the serpent's strategic patterns of deception at work in your own life? What can we learn from this story about his schemes? Where has the enemy come in and whispered a false interpretation of the facts of your life? About God's character and provision?
5. Are you eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, reaching outside of your intimacy with the Father to decide what is right and wrong apart from him? Perhaps even standing in judgement of God?

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## Respond in Prayer

*Father, even in the face rebellion, you did not abandon me. I have bought into the enemy's false interpretation of my story with you. But now that I see the truth, I'm ready to repent from faulty thinking and return to your interpretation of the facts of my life. I break my agreement with his interpretations and acknowledge you as the giver of all truth and I receive and open myself to hear the truth from you about my life. I return to you as the rightful judge. For any places in my heart where I allowed the enemy to call into question your character and your heart toward me, I repent. I reject anything I have elevated above you as an idol. Finally, I reject and cast out the spirit of rebellion from my heart, and I joyfully submit to your authority over my life and over the earth. I proclaim your goodness, your holiness, your favor, and your unending love over every aspect of my life, my soul, my heart. Thank you for being faithful, loyal, and loving. Amen.*

## Do the Word

**Design an application for your life and process the outworking of it in community.**

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# SESSION 5: THE COVENANTS, THE PROPHETS, AND THE PROMISE

**The glory of God's faithfulness is that no sin of ours has ever made him unfaithful.  
- Charles Spurgeon**

Our ancestors Adam and Eve set us on a course to make our own way, to make a name for ourselves apart from God, and to sit on a throne of autonomous judgment that was ill-fitting. Ever since, the enemy of our souls has been pushing his false narrative—that God is holding out on us, setting us up to fail, and that we can achieve our destiny or receive our inheritance apart from intimacy with him. The seeds of slavery and orphanhood have taken root, and sin that springs up from them creates a major problem: the God of holiness, justice, and righteousness is in love with a treasonous and hard-hearted people who keep demonstrating how they deserve to be under his judgement. You can witness this narrative weave its way through the Old Testament in stories like the tower of Babel, Noah's flood, God's promise to Abraham, the Israelite captivity and miraculous rescue out of Egypt, and the rise of Kings Saul, David, and Solomon, just for starters.

Yet, as Psalm 33 reminds us, "the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations." It is impossible to disconnect the human plight of rebellion and sin from the unwavering foresight and promise of God for a "way", a covering, and redemption. Remember from Ephesians 1 that "God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ."

Throughout the Old Testament, we hear the prophets foretell of the coming Messiah, the anointed one and the redemption of mankind back into God's arms. We see God continuing to actively love and pursue his Beloved, faithfully and mercifully creating avenues for return to intimacy through temple worship and the Law and the Covenants.

## Enter with Worship and Prayer

**Find songs for this session at: [timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) password: thywordisalamp**

*God of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of Glory, thank you for giving me your Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of you. I pray that the eyes of my heart may be enlightened, so that I will know what is the hope of your calling, what are the riches of the glory of your inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of your power toward us who believe.*

## Study the Scriptures

Write the main point of the passage(s) in your own words. Use an outline, drawing, or whatever helps you grasp and record the primary meaning of the text.

### Key Passages:

Genesis 12:1-3, 17:4-8

Exodus 19; 25:1-22; 40:34-38

Deuteronomy 7:6-11

Jeremiah 31:3, 31-34

Isaiah 9:2-7

A large grid of dots for writing notes.

## Review Additional Resources

Refine and expand your scriptural reflection after consulting the resources for this session at:  
[timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) password: thywordisalamp

A large grid of dots for writing notes.

## Engage in Prayerful Discussion

1. How do these passages reveal the intention of the Father as seen in Ephesians 1 and Genesis 1-2? What does he want for himself? What does he want for his people?
2. Do we see his intention and purpose change through these scriptures?
3. How does God make a way for togetherness with himself and provide a destiny for his rebellious people?
4. How has God continued to pursue you and show his faithfulness to you despite your choice of autonomy, outright rebellion, or vain self-reliance?
5. In what ways do the covenants foreshadow the good news of Christ and set up his ultimate fulfillment of these promises?

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## Respond in Prayer

*I know Father, that you set me apart for yourself before the beginning of time and that I have no greater inheritance than you. Thank you for the promise that you made when you said "I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the Lord, and they will be my people, and I will be their God, and they will return to Me, with their whole heart." Father, I do agree to make my home in your word. I return now with my whole heart, seeking the fullness of joy that is in your presence and the eternal pleasures that are at your right hand that you would truly satisfy me. Where I am satisfied with loves that are temporary or sinful I ask that you stir up more desire in me and give me more revelation of your faithful covenant love that lasts forever so my heart will respond with a deeper thirst for a higher pleasure, and that I would respond as you call me to rise and come away with you. Thank you for pursuing me so intently, my Lover. Amen.*

## Do the Word

**Design an application for your life and process the outworking of it in community.**

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# SESSION 6: THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM AND THE LIFE OF JESUS

**My idea of God is not a divine idea. It has to be shattered time after time. He shatters it himself. He is the great iconoclast. Could we not almost say that this shattering is one of the marks of his presence? The Incarnation is the supreme example; it leaves all previous ideas of the Messiah in ruins.**

**- C.S. Lewis**

So far the story of mankind is absolutely heart-rending. We are noble in destiny but fallen in nature. Image bearers of the holy, yet in practice we are so often bent toward distorting the image of God. The eternity set within us cries out to be whole and intimate with our Creator, but we are broken, and worse than that, evil—seemingly beyond repair.

But God's promises will not return to him empty (Isaiah 55:10). Four hundred years after the last prophet comes the voice of one calling out in the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord. A man named John, wearing camel hair clothes and eating locusts, started baptizing in the river, urging all who would listen to prepare themselves for the coming Messiah who would baptize with the fire of the Holy Spirit and initiate a new era for the family of God. Who would have predicted that the mighty king of Isaiah and the other prophets would make his entrance as a vulnerable infant? That God incarnate as one of his beloved humans would put on flesh and become the obedient son that Adam could not, paying the price for sin that man could never pay?

When we see Jesus, we see the perfect image of the Father. We see exactly who God is. We also see the perfect image of man as God designed him; we see a man completely submitted to the Holy Spirit. Jesus is a perfect picture of heaven, the fellowship of the Trinity embodied on earth, and we hear the invitation to all humanity into this unbroken fellowship: The kingdom of God is at hand.

## Enter with Worship and Prayer

**Find songs for this session at: [timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) password: thywordisalamp**

*God of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of Glory, thank you for giving me your Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of you. I pray that the eyes of my heart may be enlightened, so that I will know what is the hope of your calling, what are the riches of the glory of your inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of your power toward us who believe.*

## Study the Scriptures

Write the main point of the passage(s) in your own words. Use an outline, drawing, or whatever helps you grasp and record the primary meaning of the text.

**Key passages:**

John

A large grid of dotted lines for writing notes.

## Review Additional Resources

Refine and expand your scriptural reflection after consulting the resources for this session at:  
[timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) password: thywordisalamp

A large grid of dotted lines for writing notes.

## Engage in Prayerful Discussion

1. What connections can you draw between the life, message, and miracles of Jesus and Adam and Eve's original assignment? How did Jesus succeed where Adam failed?
2. John 17:26 says that Jesus reveals the Father. How is the Father revealed in Jesus' life and way?
3. In reference to John 1, Jesus is called the "Word made Flesh." Elsewhere Jesus says he came to "seek and save the lost." How do those dimensions of Jesus' identity and purpose play into the big story so far? What other elements feel highlighted for you personally at this point?
4. Can you define the kingdom of God/kingdom of heaven? How do we enter it? What is its message and how is it demonstrated? What are its core values, its ways?
5. In Psalm 139, David prays, "see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way." Take a moment to pray and ask God to do this for you, too. What ways are currently in you that are hurtful—contrary to the kingdom? What way is the Holy Spirit counseling you to walk in?

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## Respond in Prayer

*Jesus, you are an immeasurable gift. I love you. You are the most powerful and humble man to have ever walked this earth. Thank you for the good news of your kingdom and for choosing humanity—even choosing me by name. Thank you for freeing me from seeking my righteousness in the mirage of self-justification, so that I can seek first the kingdom and the righteousness that comes from you, God, and is by faith. Because of your life I can fully participate in the kingdom that is not only for me, but also among and through those just like me! I choose to follow you. To do what you do. May your light flood all of me as I look to you, and may my life give you the glory you deserve. Teach me, Rabbi, to walk as you walked in the power of the Spirit, as a royal servant who is sent to demonstrate and proclaim your kingdom of love, mercy and justice. Amen.*

## Do the Word

**Design an application for your life and process the outworking of it in community.**

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## SESSION 7: BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD

**See from his head, his hands, his feet,  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?  
- Isaac Watts**

It's impossible to overstate the glorious significance of the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. It is, with good reason, the central point in history! When God came to save the world he didn't just offer us a plan, he offered us himself. God has forever bound his destiny together with humanity. Think about it . . . The eternal God now has a belly button and a mom. Jesus is, and forever will be, a man. Even in his resurrected body he bears and is identified by the scars of his humble earthly sojourn, and he is not ashamed to call us brothers. The intimate, purposeful co-laboring with the Creator that we had in Eden is restored to humanity in Christ.

With Jesus' birth the impossible became possible. The Messiah initiated a new way of life under his reign, telling his followers to seek it as our first priority. He renewed our design and destiny, renewed our partnership with God, the earth, and each other, and opened the door to a new era in which he will "build his Church"—his family—to extend the kingdom on earth. And this time, the gates of hell will not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18).

However, as we've seen throughout this story, there is no way that we can live into the life and partnership with heaven that Jesus is offering us while our hearts are still corrupted with rebellious sin that leads to death. Nor is there a way when we exchange his functional supremacy in our lives for something lesser, as we have seen the Israelites do time and time again.

In this session, we turn our eyes toward God's solution to this enigma, where justice and mercy meet at the cross of Christ our Passover Lamb.

### Enter with Worship and Prayer

**Find songs for this session at: [timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) password: **thywordisalamp****

*God of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of Glory, thank you for giving me your Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of you. I pray that the eyes of my heart may be enlightened, so that I will know what is the hope of your calling, what are the riches of the glory of your inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of your power toward us who believe.*

# Study the Scriptures

**Write the main point of the passage(s) in your own words. Use an outline, drawing, or whatever helps you grasp and record the primary meaning of the text.**

**Key passage:**

Hebrews 10:1-25

**Supporting Passages:**

Exodus 12:1-27

Luke 22-24

1 Corinthians 10:14-22; 11:23-32

A large grid of 20 columns and 15 rows of small dots for taking notes.

# Review Additional Resources

**Refine and expand your scriptural reflection after consulting the resources for this session at: [timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) password: thywordisalamp**

A large grid of 20 columns and 15 rows of small dots for taking notes.



## Engage in Prayerful Discussion

1. What can you see about the heart of God through the connection between this passage and our previous readings in the Old Testament, Ephesians, and Colossians?
2. Why did Jesus have to die? What are the implications of his death as a sinless man?
3. What does Hebrews 10:17-18, 22 mean, especially when taken together with Ephesians 1:4? What is the common thread about how God sees us? Do you live as though you have a heart sprinkled clean from an evil conscience or are you still trying to offer something for your sin?
4. Hebrews 10:19 says we have access to the throne by the blood. Is there some other means or justification by which you try to access the presence of God?
5. Based on your reading of the 1 Corinthians passages, discuss the significance of the Lord's Supper. Why is it our central act of worship when we are gathered together?

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## Respond in Prayer

*Father, I am in awe of you, of your deep abiding love and of your faithfulness to your covenant. Thank you for providing a way for me to be brought near to your throne because of your love. Thank you that through Jesus, you solved the problem of my rebellion, and you delivered me from slavery to sin and death and the fear of death forever! In Jesus, you have provided everything your holiness requires. I humbly submit to your purpose and intention in this, and I receive the death of Jesus as the one and only atonement for my sin. I take my place in the resurrected life of Christ and proclaim with you that I am, in Christ, a new being, a new creation, and a vital member of your body with your Spirit coursing through my veins. I worship you, Jesus, as the way, the truth, and the life. Amen.*

## Do the Word

**Design an application for your life and process the outworking of it in community.**

Discuss the time that God revealed himself to you in the person of Jesus Christ and that you responded with handing him lordship over your life, claiming his death and resurrection as your salvation and him as your source of life. If you haven't yet responded or need to renew your response to his invitation into abundant life, do so now, in the presence of your community. Ask a trusted leader to guide you.

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## SESSION 8: DEAD TO SIN, ALIVE IN CHRIST

**And let me make it quite clear that when Christians say the Christ-life is in them, they do not mean simply something mental or moral. When they speak of being "in Christ" or of Christ being "in them," this is not simply a way of saying that they are thinking about Christ or copying him. They mean that Christ is actually operating through them; that the whole mass of Christians are the physical organism through which Christ acts—that we are.**

**- C. S. Lewis**

In the last two sessions we saw how Jesus reveals and puts on display the Father's ever-pursuant love and his ultimate purpose for a holy family that will multiply and extend his kingdom across the earth.

In Adam, humanity chose separation from God, but in Christ humanity is faithful to the Father. Although Adam fell short of God's glory when he united himself with the enemy's narrative by eating the forbidden fruit, Jesus refused to come into alignment with the enemy's temptations in the wilderness, and he stayed firm all the way to the cross, abandoning his will to the Father and placing his greatest joy not in his temporary satisfaction but in his highest reward. Jesus begins with intimacy and practices obedience, and in him so do we.

In the next two sessions, we will slow down in order to really dive deeper into our position in Christ's death and resurrection in our lives. We will examine how we can now think about ourselves and our place in this miraculous story, and how, in identifying with the death of Christ, we are given a new identity, a new way forward in the life of Christ, and a restoration of that for which we were originally intended.

### Enter with Worship and Prayer

**Find songs for this session at: [timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) password: thywordisalamp**

*God of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of Glory, thank you for giving me your Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of you. I pray that the eyes of my heart may be enlightened, so that I will know what is the hope of your calling, what are the riches of the glory of your inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of your power toward us who believe.*

# Study the Scriptures

Write the main point of the passage(s) in your own words. Use an outline, drawing, or whatever helps you grasp and record the primary meaning of the text.

**Key Passage:**

Romans, especially 5:6-11; 6:1-14

Dotted grid for notes.

# Review Additional Resources

Refine and expand your scriptural reflection after consulting the resources for this session at: [timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) password: thywordisalamp

Dotted grid for notes.

## Engage in Prayerful Discussion

1. What does it mean to be baptized into Christ's death and resurrection?
2. If God reconciled us when we were his enemies, and has placed us in Christ through no good work of our own, it almost seems like we don't have to do anything at all! What responses do the scriptures encourage us to embrace in Romans 6:11-23?
3. What would it be like for you to live such a response? What barriers would hinder that?
4. Take a moment to recall the story of your baptism. Did your experience carry with it the weighty significance discussed in this session? Take some time to proclaim anew your identity—your new heritage—in Christ. If you have not been baptized into Christ, talk to your leader about arranging a time to be!

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## Respond in Prayer

*Father, although without you I was helpless and dead in my sins and trespasses, thank you that you have made me alive in Jesus and that you provided a the way forward into the life of holiness you always intended for me to have. Thank you for the good news not only of your death to cover my sins, but also of your resurrection—that you desire righteously and accomplish your purposes in and through me. I've lived too long in the "old creation", stretching out to accomplishing a few things here or there in the new one. I now agree that I am a new creation and I no longer need to identify myself with the old! I am now in Christ, and no longer in Adam. My heritage has been replaced from one of sin and destruction to one of righteousness and restored purpose. I repent now, I change my mind and my attitude, to acknowledge my new place, my new identity as in Christ, sharing in his death and resurrection, as expressed through my own baptism. Hallelujah!!*

## Do the Word

**Design an application for your life and process the outworking of it in community.**

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## SESSION 9: THE GREATER LAW AND OUR ADOPTION

**I want neither a terrorist spirituality that keeps me in a perpetual state of fright about being in right relationship with my heavenly Father nor a sappy spirituality that portrays God as such a benign teddy bear that there is no aberrant behavior or desire of mine that he will not condone. I want a relationship with the Abba of Jesus, who is infinitely compassionate with my brokenness and at the same time an awesome, incomprehensible, and unwieldy Mystery.**

**- Brennan Manning**

In the last session, we saw how our baptism into Christ's death terminates our bondage to Adam's sin and its penalty, and how the resurrected life of Christ initiates our salvation. We are urged to come into agreement with God as we "reckon," or "consider ourselves," dead to sin, and present ourselves to God as instruments of righteousness, no longer sounding the discord of sin, but resonating the harmony of Christ's righteousness. This leads to our sanctification, which is the ongoing process of being transformed into the image of the Righteous One we behold! We are now restored to our original position as true sons of the Living King!

Romans 5 and 6 are *unfathomably* good news, but they don't answer the question of how we live into the truth they present on any given Wednesday when our anger, fear, or selfishness seem to shout louder than the goodness of the larger story.

In this session, we turn our eyes to the next two chapters of Romans. Don't be afraid of the tension you may feel in Romans 7 as Paul takes us on a journey through the grinding struggle of attempting to perform in the flesh under a righteous law. Allow yourself to feel the bowstring being drawn tighter and tighter throughout the chapter until it's finally released in Romans 8 which proclaims how God's truly amazing grace comes to our aid yet again as God provides not just an answer, but his very self.

### Enter with Worship and Prayer

**Find songs for this session at: [timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) password: thywordisalamp**

*God of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of Glory, thank you for giving me your Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of you. I pray that the eyes of my heart may be enlightened, so that I will know what is the hope of your calling, what are the riches of the glory of your inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of your power toward us who believe.*

## Study the Scriptures

Write the main point of the passage(s) in your own words. Use an outline, drawing, or whatever helps you grasp and record the primary meaning of the text.

### Key Passages:

Romans, especially Chapters 7 and 8

Galatians 4 and 5

A large grid of dots for writing notes.

## Review Additional Resources

Refine and expand your scriptural reflection after consulting the resources for this session at:  
[timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) password: thywordisalamp

A large grid of dots for writing notes.

## Engage in Prayerful Discussion

1. What is Paul's primary point in Romans 7 (as further illuminated by The Bible Project video and Watchman Nee's book)?
2. Respond to the quote by Watchman Nee about the day he was delivered from the Law (see this session on the resource page).
3. John Piper says, "The 'therefore' of Romans 7:25 explains that the victory does not make the warfare past; it makes it possible..." Does Romans 8 teach us to engage that warfare from human effort under the law, or under a new law (or power)? If the latter, what is the new law/power and how do we struggle against sin under it?
4. How does Galatians 5 reinforce and expand upon that idea?
5. In Romans 8 and Galatians 4, how does the Holy Spirit assure us of an identity from which we can be victorious?

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## Respond in Prayer

*I receive you by faith, Holy Spirit, so you can testify in me to my true identity that I am no longer a fearful slave but the beloved child of my Abba. Counselor, show me in my inner being how I am Abba's child and heir. Please pour God's love into my heart, Holy Spirit, and convict me of my position in Christ the obedient son. Convict me of sin if I try to do good autonomously or try to please you under a lesser Law, apart from your life-giving power. I give you my mind, so that as you govern it you will give me life and peace. I receive your power, Holy Spirit, to put the deeds of the sinful nature to death. I receive the vision to see the preciousness of my sharing in your glory and your suffering. Holy Spirit, thank you for giving me a life of hope that does not disappoint, for giving life to my mortal body, and for being my first fruits and the foretaste of my full adoption to sonship at the redemption of my body. Amen.*

## Do the Word

**Design an application for your life and process the outworking of it in community.**

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# SESSION 10: THE HOLY SPIRIT: WE HAVE A HELPER

**We must be careful not to choose, but to let God's Holy Spirit manage our lives; not to smooth down and explain away, but to stir up the gift and allow God's Spirit to disturb us and disturb us and disturb us until we yield and yield and yield and the possibility in God's mind for us becomes an established fact in our lives, with the rivers of evidence meeting the need of a dying world.**

**- Smith Wigglesworth**

Praise God that we have been delivered from the elemental principles of the world, the law of sin and death, and we have been set free from slavery to sin and fear through the death and resurrection of Jesus! Praise God that he has seen fit to make a way for us through Jesus into a life of joy and power and victory in Christ. And praise God that not only has he made a way, but that he has provided the means to walk in it: intimacy with God himself through the Holy Spirit.

Hopefully we are beginning to see that it is impossible to live into the fullness of life in Christ without the Holy Spirit. We cannot think that the Holy Spirit is an optional extra on the menu of the Christian life. No, the Holy Spirit is the power of the Christian life! Jesus said that it would be better for his disciples if he went away, which seems undebatably worse to most of us, but he knew that when he ascended he would send the Holy Spirit: "for he lives with you and will be in you" (John 14:17). Indeed, the Holy Spirit is the empowering Spirit of Christ tabernacling in us that enables us to accomplish all he has set out for us. We no longer need the temple of the Old Testament to gain access into God's presence. We *are* the temple, filled with the indwelling Holy Spirit, and his presence is always accessible! Jesus said "I will always be with you" and then was raised up into heaven. In what sense then is he with us? Through his Spirit who dwells in us. Might this be one reason why the enemy has so vehemently targeted our friendship with the Holy Spirit in the life of the church?

When we are baptized in water we come into the death and life of Jesus, and when we are baptized in the Spirit we come into the power of Jesus! This is why Jesus told his disciples to wait before beginning their mission until they were "clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:48-49). It is the Holy Spirit—the missionary Spirit of God—that anointed Jesus for his mission (Luke 4:14-21) and the same anointing Jesus had, he gives to us! The word anointed literally means "smeared". In Christ, you have been "smeared" with the Holy Spirit. Not only that, the Bible says that the anointing is "within you" (1 John 2:27), reminding us that we are, indeed, the living tabernacle of the Holy Spirit, authorized and empowered by heaven for a heavenly work. This enables us to walk in every spiritual blessing and accomplish every good work that God has designed us to do, from obeying the commands of Jesus to exercising spiritual gifts that build up and grow the body of Christ, like healing and prophecy. The Holy Spirit is the right-now deposit of our heavenly inheritance as true sons of the King who are about the Father's business.



## Enter with Worship and Prayer

**Find songs for this session at: [timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) password: thywordisalamp**

*God of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of Glory, thank you for giving me your Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of you. I pray that the eyes of my heart may be enlightened, so that I will know what is the hope of your calling, what are the riches of the glory of your inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of your power toward us who believe.*

## Study the Scriptures

**Write the main point of the passage(s) in your own words. Use an outline, drawing, or whatever helps you grasp and record the primary meaning of the text.**

**Key passage:**

John 14:16-31; 16:5-15

**Supporting Passage:**

Acts 2

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## Review Additional Resources

**Refine and expand your scriptural reflection after consulting the resources for this session at: [timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) password: thywordisalamp**

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## Engage in Prayerful Discussion

1. From the above scriptures, make a verbatim list in your notes about who the Holy Spirit is and what he does. Make sure you include specific references for each point.
2. Has the Holy Spirit has convicted you of sin, confronted lies and unbelief, and confirmed your identity as belonging to the Father?
3. What was your first known encounter with the Holy Spirit like, if you have had one? What does friendship with him look like in your life? Describe how you experience, encounter, and deepen intimacy with the Holy Spirit. What increase are you asking for?
4. Are there any obstacles that would hinder you from receiving the fullness of the Holy Spirit? Are there ways you've misunderstood, forgotten, or resisted the Holy Spirit?

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## Respond in Prayer

*Jesus, you promised that when you ascended, the Father would send the Holy Spirit to be with me forever. I unite my faith with your word and I receive your Spirit of adoption. I ask for revelation of the Spirit that is poured out based not on my worthiness or deeds but on the exaltation of Christ! Holy Spirit, increase my sense of the reality of your indwelling presence right now. You are the perfect expression of the Father's heart and the gift that my Lord Jesus most wants me to have. You are the power of the Christian life! You are my counselor and my best friend. Jesus, thank you for your promise to be with me forever, to the very end of the age. Holy Spirit, you alone can make me all that I am meant to be and you alone can accomplish through me all I was made to do. If there is any place where I am afraid, have embraced false beliefs, or have walked in ignorance of the gift that you are, please reveal it and give me the grace to repent! Amen.*

## Do the Word

**Design an application for your life and process the outworking of it in community.**

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# SESSION 11: THE GIFT OF FAITH

**Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward of this faith is to see what you believe.  
- Saint Augustine**

Recall our discussion of Genesis, and how Adam and Eve were authorized by God, the Creator, to multiply and rule over the earth and expand the family of God. At the fall, they handed the authority that they had been given to the devil by coming under and *agreeing* with his lies and deceptive story. And they exhibited that agreement through their obedience—eating the fruit. Their actions showed where their agreement, or faith, was.

Now that we are covered in the blood of Christ, indwelt with the power and presence of the Holy Spirit and our identity as beloved sons is no longer in question, our authorization has been restored and we get new opportunities daily to set our agreement, or faith, on Christ and his work on the cross and his resurrection. Alternately, we can choose to revert back to the way of Adam and Eve, to set our agreement on the lies that the devil still presents to us, and so deny the work of Christ in our lives. Sounds pretty unnatural at this point, doesn't it? That's because in Christ, it IS unnatural! Your nature is now Christ, and the expectation for believers, of course, is that we respond to the gospel *by* faith, bringing every area of our lives under submission to God and to his mission *by* faith, and thus participate in his great unfolding story in which we find ourselves with joy and thanksgiving *by* faith. This extends from our initial repentance into baptism into Christ, to living out our sanctification through the power of the Holy Spirit, to exercising our spiritual gifts in service to the community and those God is calling to himself.

Our world is under constant barrage by the enemy. The suffering and brokenness of humanity are fully displayed across news channels, social media, the lives of friends and family, and even within our own homes. In such a world, where we place our faith is of extreme importance because it signifies the motivation and belief behind our actions—the place from where we *start*. What we put our faith in reveals how we answer questions like, What will I allow to tell me about the state of the world? What do I believe about the direction the world is taking? What do I believe about God?

In the next few sessions, we will see some of the very practical and biblical ways we can expect that our faith, or agreement, will naturally inform and express itself in action—our proper responses toward living into the fullness of this story, all possible once again because of the empowering grace of God.

## Enter with Worship and Prayer

**Find songs for this session at: [timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) password: **thywordisalamp****

*God of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of Glory, thank you for giving me your Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of you. I pray that the eyes of my heart may be enlightened, so that I will know what is the hope of your calling, what are the riches of the glory of your inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of your power toward us who believe.*

# Study the Scriptures

Write the main point of the passage(s) in your own words. Use an outline, drawing, or whatever helps you grasp and record the primary meaning of the text.

**Key Passages:**

Hebrews 11, especially verses 1, 6, and 39-40

**Supporting Passages**

- 1 John 5:1-5
- Ephesians 6:10-17
- 2 Corinthians 4:16-18
- James 1:5-8
- Isaiah 26:3

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# Review Additional Resources

Refine and expand your scriptural reflection after consulting the resources for this session at:  
[timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) password: thywordisalamp

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## Engage in Prayerful Discussion

1. List the inward and outward “evidences” of faith you can see threading through the passages.
2. What is similar about the Hebrews and Corinthians passages? How, in real life, can the practice of faith described in these passages both defend you and empower you to overcome the world?
3. Why would James refer to the man without faith as “double-minded and unstable”?
4. React to this quote from Kris Vallotton: “Fear is faith in the wrong thing.” What happens when we put our faith in (come into agreement with) what the enemy says rather than God’s word? How does this concept relate to the enemy’s tactics in Genesis 3 and today?
5. The Corinthians passage talks about fixing our eyes on the eternal unseen realities, and the Hebrews passage talks about the substance of things not seen. In what practical areas of your life could the Holy Spirit be asking you to change your vision to agree with God in faith? Yourself? Your story? The way you see others? The future?
6. What might be the consequences of compassionately engaging in a broken world without placing our faith in the truthfulness of God’s promises, power, and intention for the world? How might our engagement with the world change when our faith is rightly placed in who God is, what he has done, is doing, and will do?

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## Respond in Prayer

*Lord, thank you for the gift of faith. Thanks that it comes from you and is not a work of the flesh so that no man can boast. Jesus, you said “Don’t be afraid; just believe” so I take courage and receive the gift of faith today. I choose to exercise it as my overcoming weapon and my shield against the accuser. Holy Spirit, reveal to me places where I have activated my faith in something less than you, something that is temporal instead of eternal so I can change my mind and come into agreement with your vision, making it visible and tangible in my life. Show me where my vision of myself, my story, other people, and my future needs to agree with your words, and lead me into fruitful action that will agree with your purposes. Thank you for giving me the power to come into agreement with you! Amen.*

## Do the Word

**Design an application for your life and process the outworking of it in community.**

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## SESSION 12: BECOMING A DISCIPLE

**[To have faith in Christ] means, of course, trying to do all that he says. There would be no sense in saying you trusted a person if you would not take his advice. Thus if you have really handed yourself over to him, it must follow that you are trying to obey him. But trying in a new way, a less worried way. Not doing these things in order to be saved, but because he has begun to save you already. Not hoping to get to heaven as a reward for your actions, but inevitably wanting to act in a certain way because a first faint gleam of heaven is already inside you.**

**- C. S. Lewis**

As seen in the last session, we expect that our actions, speech, and practices will align as we unite our faith with God's word. That is what makes us disciples of Jesus. A disciple follows in the way of the rabbi; in fact, the root word of disciple is related to the idea of an apprentice to a master craftsman. The apprentice helps the master craftsman and learns to do what the master does. And that does not happen passively. Paul said "I labor, striving according to his power, which mightily works within me" (Colossians 1:29).

Our lives before Jesus were characterized by slavery, which expresses itself in a *reactionary* way—our circumstances, feelings, money, time, etc. ruled us and we reacted! But now that we have been redeemed by God's grace, we are sons, and our sonship expresses itself in *rulership*, where we—empowered by the Holy Spirit—practice our authority by being good stewards of our minds, wills, emotions, bodies, time and money (and so much more). If this does not seem like an easy task, take heart! We were made to rule, to reign, and to overcome—and just like taking the promised land was a process for the Israelites— it will be a process for us to rule, reign, and overcome in both our inner and outer lives!

But the good news is we are not left to do it alone. When the Bible tells us to repent, it is telling us to turn to God. That means we not only turn away from *evil works*, but we also must turn from *good works* that are done in the flesh, which means apart from the empowering presence of God, especially those works we would use to justify ourselves before God. Good works are no better at making us righteous in God's sight than evil works. Any work not sourced in God is a *dead work* from which Hebrews 6 tells us to repent. Indeed, "whatever is not from faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). One remarkable thing about the story of the lost sons in Luke 15, is that both the son who wandered and wasted his inheritance, and the son who stayed and worked for his inheritance, needed to turn away from themselves (whether their rebellion or self-justification) and turn toward the Father.

So we see that as disciples, our works do not bring us to God but they express—and even enhance—our relationship with God. Jesus said, "My Father works unceasingly and so do I" (John 5:17). Like father, like son. Now, we are no longer talking about justification, but the outworking of the unmerited favor of God expressing itself through his active work and presence which fulfills all that he requires. We are saved by grace and so we are also sanctified by grace, but transformation as a disciple doesn't come to us only as we feel the right feelings about ourselves and God, but as we *do* what Jesus is doing. Jesus said "Take

my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your soul” (Matthew 11:29).

How do we learn from Jesus and find rest for our souls? By getting under the yoke and pulling alongside him. Rest for the body is healthy, but have you ever noticed how physical rest often cannot quell inner unrest? Rest for the soul is being yoked with Jesus. In this session, we will consider how the Bible instructs us to live out the Christian life with the Lord who says “Follow me.”

## Enter with Worship and Prayer

**Find songs for this session at: [timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) password: thywordisalamp**

*God of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of Glory, thank you for giving me your Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of you. I pray that the eyes of my heart may be enlightened, so that I will know what is the hope of your calling, what are the riches of the glory of your inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of your power toward us who believe.*

## Study the Scriptures

**Write the main point of the passage(s) in your own words. Use an outline, drawing, or whatever helps you grasp and record the primary meaning of the text.**

**Key scriptures:**

1 John 3:1-10  
Hebrews 3:7-4:16

**Additional scriptures:**

Psalms 127:1-2  
2 Corinthians 10:3-5  
James 2:14-26; 4:7  
Phil 3:1-14  
Romans 8:1

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## Review Additional Resources

Refine and expand your scriptural reflection after consulting the resources for this session at:  
[timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) password: thywordisalamp

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## Engage in Prayerful Discussion

1. From the above scriptures, how is our sonship expected to express itself in obedience to Christ? Is there any evidence that our sonship excuses us from having to live into and practice our healing and victory in Jesus?
2. According to the scriptures, what does it look like to do good works in Christ? What does it look like to do the work that Christ has already accomplished for us? What would be the result of not uniting our actions with the work of Christ for us and in us?
3. According to Hebrews and Psalm 127, describe the connection that belief in and alignment to the activity of God has with rest. What does unbelief lead to?
4. The writer of Hebrews expands the commandment to honor the Sabbath and keep it holy from taking a day off every week to more of a state of being *in Christ*. Based on what we've journeyed through over the last few sessions, how might that expansion help us as we work to unify *who we are* with *what we practice*?

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## Respond in Prayer

*Father, you love me! You have adopted me as your son and have given me all the rights and inheritances of an heir! And you didn't stop there—you provided everything that I would need to come into agreement with and walk in this destiny in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. As Isaiah says, "You will establish peace for us, since you have also performed for us all our works." I repent for trying to accomplish on my own what you have already done for me in the Spirit, and I receive your Sabbath rest for my soul. From that place of rest, I can work alongside you, follow behind you, strive mightily in your grace, and rule and reign with you, and the temptations of the enemy will no longer be my master. I reject hopelessness and despair, shame and condemnation, and I will no longer allow them to keep me from living in the fullness of your victory. I reject the spirit of entitlement—the lie that my sonship and position in you excuses me from having to live into and practice the victory you won for me. Continually I submit myself to you, Jesus. Give me true rest, teach me how to share your yoke, so that I may experience the peace, joy, hope and victory. Amen.*

## Do the Word

**Design an application for your life and process the outworking of it in community.**

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## SESSION 13: FORGIVING, BLESSING, AND SEEING

**Made for spirituality, we wallow in introspection. Made for joy, we settle for pleasure. Made for justice, we clamor for vengeance. Made for relationship, we insist on our own way. Made for beauty, we are satisfied with sentiment. But new creation has already begun. The sun has begun to rise. Christians are called to leave behind, in the tomb of Jesus Christ, all that belongs to the brokenness and incompleteness of the present world ... That, quite simply, is what it means to be Christian: to follow Jesus Christ into the new world, God's new world, which he has thrown open before us. - N.T. Wright**

When Jesus taught his disciples to pray in Matthew 6, he included precious little. Worship the Father. Pray for his kingdom to come. Seek him as our source daily. Receive forgiveness in the same way we extend it. Jesus ends his model prayer with the petition to be led away from temptation and delivered from evil, but then returns to the topic of forgiveness to give some additional instruction:

“For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.” Jesus meek and mild is not mincing words. Why is forgiveness so high on his priority list?

As we have seen, our ability to forsake our former sin and rebellion and to be disciples who walk as Jesus walked depends utterly on the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. In addition to cultivating an immersive friendship with the Spirit and exercising faith that agrees with God, we must also choose to wield the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, on behalf others, and let our action and speech toward one another illustrate our faith that God is who he says he is, and I am who he says I am, and you are who he says you are.

Don't miss the magnitude of loving and blessing as they fall into the larger story of the gospel. Love is the fulfilment of the whole law, and God's promise to Abraham was that “through your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed” (Genesis 22:18). But how will we love and bless if we cannot first forgive one another and see one another from God's viewpoint rather than from a limited human perspective?

### Enter with Worship and Prayer

**Find songs for this session at: [timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) password: thywordisalamp**

*God of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of Glory, thank you for giving me your Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of you. I pray that the eyes of my heart may be enlightened, so that I will know what is the hope of your calling, what are the riches of the glory of your inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of your power toward us who believe.*

# Study the Scriptures

Write the main point of the passage(s) in your own words. Use an outline, drawing, or whatever helps you grasp and record the primary meaning of the text.

**Key Passage:**  
Matthew 18:21-35

**Supporting Passages:**  
2 Corinthians 5:14-21  
1 Peter 2:21-25  
James 3:1-12  
Ephesians 4:20-32  
Romans 12:9-21

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# Review Additional Resources

Refine and expand your scriptural reflection after consulting the resources for this session at:  
[timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) password: thywordisalamp

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## Do the Word

**Design an application for your life and process the outworking of it in community.**

Ask the Lord how he sees someone in your group, your church, or your life whom you have struggled to forgive, see, and bless. Go through these steps in regards to your relationship with them and end by speaking or writing a blessing to him or her from God's perspective. We strongly suggest giving a physical blessing—a financial offering, a gift, even a box of tea. That way, when you think of or see that person, you will remember the blessing instead of the offense! Write down a your plan. Then repeat for others and for your entire community! Now you are learning how to partner with God in stewarding the kind of community that he commands and everyone wants! It's not easy, but it's worth it.

A large grid of small dots for writing, consisting of 20 rows and 40 columns.

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## SESSION 14: LIFE IN THE FAMILY OF GOD

**God has prepared for himself one great song of praise throughout eternity, and those who enter the community of God join in this song. It is the song that the “morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy” at the creation of the world (Job 38:7). It is the victory song of the children of Israel after passing through the Red Sea, the Magnificat of Mary after the annunciation, the song of Paul and Silas in the night of prison, the song of the singers on the sea of glass after their rescue, the “song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb” (Revelation 15:3). It is the song of the heavenly fellowship.  
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

In the previous session, we saw, and hopefully experienced, how the power of forgiving, blessing, and seeing ourselves and one another according to the Spirit releases us to live in a whole new way. Specifically, it allows us to live with true vision. Spiritual eyes. In fact, the simple and basic virtue of *respect* is to look at someone with new eyes: *re* has to do with “again or new” as in rebirth, and *spect* has to do with seeing, as in spectacles. Because of Christ we no longer keep records of wrongs, debts, and sins which would perpetuate our seeing what is old, inferior, decaying, and passing away about others, but instead in Christ we are looking right through those outward and temporary things into the potential, destiny, design, and eternal delightful treasure that every person is meant to become. Can you imagine what living in a family that operates out of this reality would be like? What about a community?

This is quality of life that we are not only invited into but commanded to maintain as the clarified community of God’s kingdom, a people who live under the reign of Jesus. We are the family that is built upon all the benefits of his cross, his resurrection, and his Spirit. The simple, hard, and worth-it practices of forgiving, blessing, and seeing by the Spirit are central to our life as the church and they are the only things that will allow us to come into the sincere love, honesty, and generous celebration that must define the people of God on the Earth.

If this seems hard to believe or reconcile with your experience of the church thus far, it might be time to allow yourself to come into a new understanding of what church is. Clinging to worldly understandings and visions of her will yield endless disappointment. Remember, just as we once saw Christ according to the flesh, we do so no longer. The new way of seeing one another is not just for individuals, of course, but for the whole church.

The church is not a tired institution or a boring meeting. Nor is she an efficient institution or an exciting meeting, though she may have all of those things. Handing the church to the spirit of religion will not change the Father’s eternal plan or excuse any of us from being part of her. Let’s continue in the book of Ephesians to see if we can better understand how God sees his church, what her role is in the larger story of the gospel we are living into, and what responsibility believers have to one another and to the furthering of the kingdom as a clarified community of awakened people.

# Enter with Worship and Prayer

Find songs for this session at: [timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) password: **thywordisalamp**

*God of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of Glory, thank you for giving me your Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of you. I pray that the eyes of my heart may be enlightened, so that I will know what is the hope of your calling, what are the riches of the glory of your inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of your power toward us who believe.*

## Study the Scriptures

**Write the main point of the passage(s) in your own words. Use an outline, drawing, or whatever helps you grasp and record the primary meaning of the text.**

### Key Passage:

Ephesians (review 1-2 then study 3-6)

### Supporting passages:

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Colossians 1:18

Matthew 16:18

Romans 12:1-8

A large grid of dots for taking notes.

## Review Additional Resources

Refine and expand your scriptural reflection after consulting the resources for this session at:  
[timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) password: thywordisalamp

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## Engage in Prayerful Discussion

1. What images does Paul use to describe the church? What does each image uniquely reveal and require in terms of how we are to relate to one another and Jesus? (Hint: there are at least four.)
2. What does Ephesians 3:1-11 teach us about the church's role in the larger story of the gospel as it unfolds from the vantage point of the spiritual realm (or heavenlies)?
3. A wonderful proclamation of the gospel and the proclamation of our identity as a part of Christ's body are linked with many commands and prohibitions in Ephesians. What is specifically encouraged? What is specifically prohibited? Make a quick list (see especially Ephesians 4-6). Which ones is the Holy Spirit asking you to observe right now?
4. What are the five people-gifts that Christ gives to the church in Ephesians 4 and what is their purpose according to that passage? Do you see those gifts in operation around you?
5. How do Paul's commands and expectations for unity, the believers' way of life together, and their engagement with the people-gifts from Christ connect with the purpose of the Father and the role of the church in the story of the gospel?

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## Respond in Prayer

*Father of All, from the beginning you have destined us to be your family and a prophetic picture of the fellowship you have together as the Trinity, to bring glory to yourself and to bring your kingdom to the earth. I embrace your church, my family, fully—even the parts of her that I don't agree with or understand, and I claim her as my own. I repent if I have kept other members of your body at arm's length or if I have denied their legitimacy. I choose to see her as you see her. Give me grace as I learn to speak in love and act in a way that demonstrates unity in my own household and in every other sphere of influence I have. I ask this so that I can do my part to build up the body in love and see your bride fulfil her destiny of displaying your manifold wisdom in the heavenlies. Amen.*

## Do the Word

**Design an application for your life and process the outworking of it in community.**

Do you see the church of the world unified, helping and resourcing one another? The church of your nation? The church of your city? Your own local church? In your life application for this session, set out to get your heart free from your own judgements about the church local, national, global, and eternal. Release forgiveness and blessing over her, and make a plan as a community to move toward and be a blessing to the rest of the church in your city.

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## SESSION 15: THE KINGDOM FAMILY ON MISSION

**Jesus' resurrection is the beginning of God's new project not to snatch people away from earth to heaven but to colonize earth with the life of heaven. That, after all, is what the Lord's Prayer is about.**

**- N.T. Wright**

So now the church—a city of awakened believers, built on a firm foundation, moving together in unity—is the evidence of God's continued intention and wisdom for how his kingdom will be established on earth as it is in heaven. The church—both gathered and scattered—is a prophetic picture of the joyful heavenly goodness, intimate family fellowship, and dynamic merciful power of the Trinity. The church is meant to display what the kingdom looks like lived out among a called people, on earth as it is in heaven.

Now is the time for the church to freely offer to this world the blessing of the kingdom that is uniquely held by her as God's beloved bride, anointed with his Spirit. We offer the lost sheep of this so-often broken, imprisoned, orphaned, blind, hateful, and isolated planet the favor of the Living God who heals, sets free, embraces opens eyes, loves, and invites into a shared glorious destiny. The church is the only people who carry this deep well because it is the only people who have been transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the beloved son (Colossians 1:13).

The word “kingdom” is becoming a popular adjective for whatever is not religious, not rooted in a single Christian institution, or not generally stuffy or uncool. But we must be careful to remember that “kingdom” does not refer to a general positivity, but whatever is fully under the reign and rule of Jesus and infused in the way he operates. The centrality and sustaining power of the King of Kings is the substance of the “kingdom”. As Jesus said, “Every plant which my heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted” (Matthew 15:13). So whatever “good” humans may try to do, if it isn't sourced in Jesus, is temporary at best. But the kingdom of God, which was the primary message of Jesus, is the already yet still-advancing restoration of a world under the life-giving rulership of the all-sufficient, generous, holy God that all of us have ached for since Adam and Eve gazed past a flashing sword that blocked the way to Eden.

And who carries the presence of the Beloved Son through the power of the Holy Spirit? His church—the discipleship family who carries the risen life of Christ in its body, the sons of God whom the world groans to behold in their glory.

The call of the gospel is not just about what we have been saved *out of*, but it is even moreso about what we are called *into*: a worshipping family on a kingdom mission in all spheres of life. Let's turn our eyes toward the scriptures to gain a better understanding of that mission.

# Enter with Worship and Prayer

Find songs for this session at: [timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) password: thywordisalamp

*God of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of Glory, thank you for giving me your Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of you. I pray that the eyes of my heart may be enlightened, so that I will know what is the hope of your calling, what are the riches of the glory of your inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of your power toward us who believe.*

# Study the Scriptures

**Write the main point of the passage(s) in your own words. Use an outline, drawing, or whatever helps you grasp and record the primary meaning of the text.**

**Key Passages:**

Matthew 28:18-19; Luke 24:45-49  
Acts 1-2

**Supporting Passages:**

John 14:11-12  
Romans 8:21  
Luke 10:1-24

A large grid of dotted lines for writing notes.

# Review Additional Resources

Refine and expand your scriptural reflection after consulting the resources for this session at:  
[timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) password: thywordisalamp

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# Engage in Prayerful Discussion

1. Do the disciples in Acts 1-2 carry forward the way that Jesus taught them in Luke 10? What elements do you see at work in both passages?
2. If Jesus has ascended to the right hand of the Father, in what sense is he “with you always, to the very end of the age”?
3. Do the scriptures primarily point to the accomplishment of the great commission as done by individuals for individuals, or does the Bible make a case for community and togetherness with a clarified family (oikos) of believers in the way and outcome of the mission?
4. Can you find any scriptural evidence that some believers are exempt from the great commission or can choose another mission statement instead?
5. By what authority can people proclaim the kingdom through action and word and establish churches?

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# Respond in Prayer

*Thank you, God, that although I was an orphan and a stranger, cut off and without hope in the world, you have made me a saint and a citizen of your kingdom. You have saved me out of sin and death and into a family with a mission, to rule and reign, extending your kingdom of love throughout this earth by being intimate with you and fruitful in your grace and power. Thank you that you decided the time and place I would be born so that I could reach out and find you, and so that I could worship you and accomplish the good works that you created me to do. I choose to find my highest joy in glorifying you and participating in your redemptive plan for the world. Holy Spirit, I invite you to help me see the specific ways I personally, and we as a people who are a tangible expression of your eternal bride, can move with you in all of this. Amen.*

# Do the Word

**Design an application for your life and process the outworking of it in community.**

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## SESSION 16: CHRIST WILL COME AGAIN

**The books or the music in which we thought the beauty was located will betray us if we trust to them; it was not in them, it only came through them, and what came through them was longing.**

**These things—the beauty, the memory of our own past—are good images of what we really desire; but if they are mistaken for the thing itself they turn into dumb idols, breaking the hearts of their worshippers. For they are not the thing itself; they are only the scent of a flower we have not found, the echo of a tune we have not heard, news from a country we have never yet visited.**

**- C. S. Lewis**

Two millennia ago Jesus was born in a stable and laid in a feed trough while angels sang about it to low-wage shepherds working the graveyard shift. He grew up in a backwater town and lived as a construction worker until he turned rabbi of several rough-hewn fisherman, a sketchy revolutionary and a suspicious tax collector. His message proclaimed a kingdom that welcomed the lowest yet held a higher standard for holiness than the professionally religious would even dare to entertain. He ministered to the afflicted with incredible endurance while dodging the traps and plots of the religious elite who wanted to kill him. When he was finally betrayed by his own, he healed the one who came to arrest him and prayed—while he suffered—for the ones who crucified him, ultimately laying down his life to rescue mankind once and for all from their rebellion.

On the third day he defeated death and walked out of his grave and was promptly mistaken for a gardener. He came as the new Adam and won authority over all heaven and earth, fulfilling the words of the prophets, and yet he prioritized serving a surprise breakfast for a few devastated friends on the beach and offered his hands and side to reassure the troubled mind of a single skeptic. And when finally asked “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” he redemptively commissioned his disciples into a mission that upgraded their greatest hopes from redemption for Israel to redemption for the whole world. He then ascended to sit at the right hand of the Father until all things are put under his feet.

Jesus is the humble king who rode into town on a donkey.

But when he returns he will be on a white warhorse wearing robes dipped in blood, with a sword in his hand.

We desperately need this. We need justice. We need righteousness to reign. We need God to do away with evil. There can be no heaven—his kingdom cannot fully come—where there is sin and evil because where evil remains, the diminishment, distortion, and destruction of God’s beloved creation remains. We need the Lamb who was slain to be exalted. Every knee must bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord.

## Enter with Worship and Prayer

Find songs for this session at: [timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) password: thywordisalamp

*God of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of Glory, thank you for giving me your Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of you. I pray that the eyes of my heart may be enlightened, so that I will know what is the hope of your calling, what are the riches of the glory of your inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of your power toward us who believe.*

## Study the Scriptures

**Write the main point of the passage(s) in your own words. Use an outline, drawing, or whatever helps you grasp and record the primary meaning of the text.**

### Key Passages:

Revelation 5, 19-22

### Supporting Passages:

Psalm 96, 98

Acts 1:1-11 (esp 11)

Romans 8:18-25

Hebrews 11:8-16

1 Corinthians 15

A large grid of dots for writing notes, consisting of 20 columns and 20 rows.

# Review Additional Resources

Refine and expand your scriptural reflection after consulting the resources for this session at:  
[timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) password: thywordisalamp

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# Engage in Prayerful Discussion

1. What do each of these scriptures illuminate about God’s heart? What does he want?
2. Compare Genesis 1 and the account of the new heavens and new earth in Revelation, especially chapter 22. What parallels can you draw between the two? What threads do you see between this and God’s original intention as represented in Genesis 1 and Ephesians 1?
3. The Christian hope of heaven has often been unfortunately caricatured as a disembodied cloud-land filled with harps and gossamer wings but where nothing happens. Boring! But looking at these scriptures, what can we look forward to in the reality of what the Bible also calls *the renewal of all things, the age to come, and the resurrection*?
4. What are some of the ways the utter goodness of heaven calls to you now, like Lewis’s “news from a far off country” or “echo of a tune we have not yet heard”? In light of Romans 8 and Hebrews 11, talk about your groaning hope for your better country. What do you have as first fruits that you are suffering for and waiting eagerly for the completion of? In what ways does this “now and not yet” compel you to live better?

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# Review Historical Creeds, Write, and Share Your Own

See the creeds on [timandlaurie.org/reorient](http://timandlaurie.org/reorient) (password: **thywordisalamp**) and make notes on the form and content:

A large grid of dotted lines for taking notes.

**Write your own confession of faith on your own notebook or electronic device. Further guidance:**

- Confessions of faith help us ready ourselves to give an answer for the hope we have, and give us practice articulating the gospel—the power of God for the salvation of those who believe. However, by nature, they are also always insufficient. Keep a sporting attitude while writing and know that your confession of faith is not a concrete document that you have to abide by forever-and-always, but a brief expression of your faith as you are working it out at this moment, and the process of writing it out may even be instrumental in your growth as a believer.
- It may be best to create a soft document that you can refine over time as you continue to discuss together and the Holy Spirit continues to reveal himself. It is to be expected and encouraged that these may morph into beautiful and creative expressions (in the past these have taken the form of songs, poems, etc.), but *make sure you craft a concise but thorough statement of belief first*.
- Start with an outline of key elements and be as brief as possible. Be sure to include the proclamation of the story, a focus on each person of the Trinity, blessing and identification with the church and her mission, the expected actions that are core to the outworking of our identity in the story, and any other elements that you hold to be foundational to your and our faith.
- Some confessions come as “I believe” affirmations, others are narrative stories. Almost all include elements of both, but could be organized either way.
- We have found that it’s best to gather together in a supportive environment and share confessions while they are mostly shaped but still rough drafts. This allows some affirmation and some direction to be shared with one another.
- Confessions of faith should be submitted to trusted leaders who can both affirm and challenge certain aspects of our confessions. This is a wonderful open door for further shepherding and discipling.
- After our leaders have taken a look at the groups’ confessions of faith, we have approved many of them to be read as we serve communion to one another at our church gatherings. They, together with historical creeds and scriptures, are a wonderful way to keep the whole gospel before us as a community and to celebrate the Trinity in a way that is unique to our community’s journey.

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