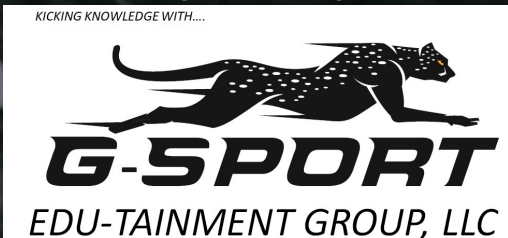


# Anchored in Christ

A 6-Week Men's Journey Through Trust, Faith & Servant-Leadership

Prepared by:



# INTRODUCTION

In an age defined by relentless deadlines, shifting priorities, and mounting pressures on work, family, and faith, many men find themselves wrestling with questions of purpose, resilience, and identity. This six-week study—rooted in the journeys of Jesus and His closest companions—will explore how first-century disciples navigated storms of doubt, danger, and disappointment, and how their example speaks powerfully into the 21st-century man’s world. Each week we’ll tackle a distinct theme drawn from the Gospels and Epistles, connecting ancient truths to modern struggles:

## **1.Trust in God When Times Get Tough**

Discover how Peter’s faltering faith on the Sea of Galilee (Matt. 14:22–33) and the psalmist’s refuge in God (Psalm 46) equip us to lean on divine strength when career setbacks, relational conflict, or personal loss threaten to overwhelm.

## **2.Faith in God During Perilous Times**

Learn from Jesus’ rebuke of the storm (Mark 4:35–41) and Hebrews 11’s heroes of faith how to stand firm when economic uncertainty, health crises, or cultural upheaval rise against us.

## **3.Guidance from the Holy Spirit When Our Minds Are Troubled**

Explore John 14’s promise of the Spirit as Advocate and Philippians 4:6–9’s blueprint for prayerful peace, so that anxious thoughts and day-to-day distractions give way to clear direction and inner calm.

## **4.Cultivating Gratitude When Life Seems Still**

Reflect on Mary’s choice to sit at Jesus’ feet (Luke 10:38–42) alongside Paul’s command to “give thanks in all circumstances” (1 Thess. 5:16–18), learning how thankfulness in the quiet seasons reshapes our outlook and renews our hope.

## **5.Waiting on God’s Timing & Blessings**

Draw strength from Isaiah 40:28–31’s promise of renewed wings and John 11’s delay in raising Lazarus, discovering how patient hope in God’s perfect schedule builds character and prepares us for breakthrough.

## **6.Following Jesus as Disciples Who Serve Others—Even in Need**

Embrace the servant-heart of John 13’s foot washing and Paul’s joy in weakness (2 Cor. 12:9–10) to find the paradox that our greatest impact comes when we give generously, even while depending on God’s grace ourselves.

Throughout these gatherings, we’ll engage Scripture, share real-life applications, and bond in honest fellowship—addressing challenges unique to men: the pressure to provide, the struggle to lead with humility, and the desire to balance personal need with sacrificial outreach. By tracing the footsteps of Jesus and His disciples, you’ll gain practical tools for living out faith, hope, and love in the very midst of life’s complexities. Join us as we strengthen one another to trust, to wait, to serve, and to thrive under the steadying hand of our Savior.

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SESSION 1

# Trust in God When Times Get Tough

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**Matthew 14:22–33**

Presented By: Brother Berry Glenn, III



# The Importance of Always Trusting In God When Times Get Tough

Trust is the lifeline that carries us through life's fiercest storms. When uncertainty looms—whether in the form of personal loss, unanswered prayers, or global upheaval—our natural impulse is to grasp for control or retreat into fear. Yet Scripture calls us to a different posture: to fix our eyes not on the storm's fury but on the One who commands the wind and waves (Mark 4:39).

This study on **Trust in God When Times Get Tough** invites you to explore the rich biblical witness of God's unshakable faithfulness. From the psalmist's declaration that "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1) to the disciples' crisis on Galilee's waters (Matthew 14:22–33), we will journey together through the narratives, parables, and promises that underpin a trust worth holding onto.

Whether you find yourself navigating small daily anxieties or life-altering trials, may these pages encourage you to lean into God's steadfast character, deepen your prayer life, and discover the peace that transcends every tempest. As you learn to anchor your hope in His unchanging nature, you will find that even the darkest nights can become arenas of profound encounter with the One who ever whispers, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid" (Matthew 14:27).



## (Matthew 14:22–33)

- 22 Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd.
- 23 After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray.  
Later that night, he was there alone,
- 24 and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.
- 25 Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear.
- 27 But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”
- 28 “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.”
- 29 “Come,” he said.
- Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!”
- 31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?”
- 32 And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. 33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”



# Historical and Literary Context Of Matthew 14:22-33

## 1. Feed-and-Pray Narrative

Matthew structures this miracle immediately after the Feeding of the 5,000 (Matt 14:13–21) to reveal both Jesus' authority over physical needs and His devotion to prayer (He goes up the mountain alone).

## 2. Disciples' Formation

The journey across the sea is a formative test of the disciples' trust—first in the treacherous conditions, then in their Master who transcends nature.

## 3. Christology

By walking on water and calming the wind, Jesus demonstrates His divine sovereignty over creation (echoing God's command in Genesis 1). The disciples' final confession, "Truly you are the Son of God," crowns this display of deity.





## Feed-and-Pray Narrative

*Immediately after Jesus miraculously feeds the five thousand (Matt 14:13–21), we find Him sending the disciples away by boat while He withdraws alone to pray.*

- **Physical Provision Meets Spiritual Communion:** The feeding miracle demonstrated Jesus' compassion and power to meet the crowd's most basic need—hunger. But He doesn't linger in the crowds. He "went up on the mountain by Himself to pray" (14:23), signaling that His authority over creation flows from intimate communion with the Father.
- **Setting the Stage for Divine Intervention:** By structuring the walk-on-water episode as the sequel to the feeding, Matthew invites us to see a holistic portrait of Jesus: He is both Provider (He feeds us) and Intercessor (He prays for us). When the wind-whipped sea threatens to drown the disciples, it is the same Son who fed them who now stands against the storm—having first drawn strength from the Father in prayer.
- **Application Today:** In our own lives, God often meets our physical or practical needs just before calling us into deeper dependence on Him in prayer. The union of "feed and pray" teaches that sustained ministry and miraculous provision alike issue from a heart devoted to communion with God.





## Disciples' Formation

- **Trust Tested in Two Phases:** First, the disciples battle waves they can see—an external crisis that demands teamwork (rowing) and courage. Then they confront a spiritual perplexity—a ghost?—when Jesus approaches. Only through stepping out of the boat in faith does Peter experience both triumph (walking on water) and failure (sinking).
- **Setting the Stage for Divine Intervention:** Each moment—straining at the oars, faltering in fear, crying out for rescue—serves as an instructional vignette. They learn that human effort alone cannot overcome every tempest; they must learn to recognize Jesus' voice amid chaos (“Take heart; it is I” 14:27) and call on Him when their faith wavers.
- **Application Today:** God often allows storms in our lives not merely to punish or frighten us, but to teach us trust. Like the disciples, we discover that spiritual formation happens when our deepest fears collide with Jesus' loving authority—and when, even in failure, His hand is stretched out to save us.



# Christology

- **Sovereignty Over Creation:** In Genesis 1, God speaks the world into existence—commanding waters to recede. Here, the incarnate Word treads on the same waters, commanding the storm to cease. The disciples’ awe—“Truly you are the Son of God” (14:33)—is Matthew’s climactic confession of Jesus’ divine identity.
- **Theological Fulfillment:** This moment foreshadows the cosmic authority displayed in the resurrection (Matt 28) and final judgment (Matt 25). It anchors Jesus’ earthly ministry not merely in moral teaching but in ontological unity with the Father.
- **Application Today:** Recognizing Jesus as Lord over the natural world—and therefore over the “storms” of our hearts and circumstances—transforms fear into worship. Our confession of His deity isn’t abstract doctrine but a life-changing truth: the One who commands the seas is the same One who walks beside us when we step out in faith.

# Application for Christians Today



## Navigating Life's Storms

“Storms” can be financial pressures, health crises, relationship breakdowns, or global uncertainties. Like the disciples, we are often overwhelmed when we focus on the “wind” rather than the One who commands it.

Take-away: Cultivate a habit of lifting your eyes to Jesus in prayer (Matt 14:23), especially when waves crash around you.



## Stepping Out in Faith

“Come” - Peter’s invitation remains for us. When God calls, we’re invited to step into the unknown by faith (new job, unfamiliar ministry, difficult decision).

Take-away: Obeying Christ may involve risk, but even if faith falters, His hand is there when we cry, “Lord, save me!”



## Dependence on Christ's Power

“Victory” - Just as Jesus walked on water by the Father’s authority, our victories over sin, anxiety, and discouragement come through His power, not our own.

Take-away: Regularly remind yourself of Christ’s past faithfulness (journaling answered prayers) to bolster confidence in His ongoing care.



## Corporate Worship & Testimony

“Truly you are the Son of God” - The disciples’ worship in the boat models how encountering God’s miraculous work compels us to praise and to bear witness.

Take-away: Share your “storm stories” in small groups or with unbelieving friends as evidence of Christ’s real-time compassion and authority.

# Bringing It Together

**Matthew 14:22–33** is not only a gripping rescue story but also a richly layered theological portrait.

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- Through the **Feed-and-Pray Narrative**, we see that miraculous provision and prayerful devotion are inseparable.
- In the **Disciples' Formation** motif, the crisis becomes the classroom where faith is forged.
- And in the **Christology** lens, Jesus' mastery over the elements reveals His divine nature and elicits our worship. For Christians today, these threads weave into a single tapestry: Jesus both feeds and rescues, teaches and transforms, and reigns supremely—inviting us to trust Him above all.





# Discussion Questions



1. What “storms” in your life right now tempt you to take your eyes off Jesus?
2. How can you intentionally “be still” and pray before reacting?
3. In what ways have you seen Christ’s presence (“It is I”) in a recent crisis?
4. How can your testimony encourage others?

## SESSION 2

# Faith in God During Perilous Times

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Mark 4:35–41

Presented By: Brother Harold Ray, Sr.



# The Importance of Always Having Faith In God During Perilous Times

Perilous times test the very foundations of our faith. Whether beset by personal crises, societal unrest, or sudden upheavals beyond our control, we are called to stand not on the shifting sands of circumstance but on the unshakeable rock of God's promises. Throughout Scripture, we see that true faith is refined in the furnace of adversity: Noah entrusted an impossible ark (Hebrews 11:7), Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego faced fiery trials (Daniel 3), and the apostles persevered under persecution and prison (Acts 5).

This study on Faith in God During Perilous Times will guide you through these heroic examples and the teachings of Jesus, who calmed the storm with a word (Mark 4:39) and invited His followers to trust Him even when the waves threatened to engulf them. As we explore biblical narratives, practical applications, and heartfelt reflections, may your courage be renewed, your hope strengthened, and your faith deepened—so that when the next storm darkens the horizon, you will stand firm, proclaiming with unwavering confidence that our God is greater than every gale.



## Mark 4:35–41

35 On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.”

36 And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him.

37 And a great windstorm arose, and the waves broke into the boat, so that the boat was already filling.

38 But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?”

39 And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

40 He said to them, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?”

41 And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”



# Historical and Literary Context Of Mark 4:35-41

## 1. Mark's Gospel as Action-Oriented


Mark introduces Jesus' miracles rapidly to show His authority in word and deed. This is the fourth of eight "signs" in the Galilean ministry.

## 2. Immediate Transition

This story follows the Parable of the Soils (Mark 4:1–34), which contrasts hardened hearts with receptive ones. Just as faith must take root, the disciples must learn to trust Jesus in real danger.

## 3. Setting & Stakes

Crossing the Sea of Galilee was a routine—until a sudden, violent squall threatened to swamp even multiple boats. The disciples, seasoned fishermen, panic when Jesus sleeps undisturbed, revealing both their fear and their lack of trust.



CREATION: DAY 1

*Let There Be Light*

## Theological Themes

*Immediately after Jesus miraculously feeds the five thousand (Matt 14:13–21), we find Him sending the disciples away by boat while He withdraws alone to pray.*

- **Jesus' Sovereignty Over Creation**

By commanding wind and waves, Jesus displays divine power (echoing God's creative commands in Genesis 1).

- **The Question of Faith**

Jesus' rebuke ("Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?") highlights that spiritual security depends not on calm seas, but on trust in Him.

- **Revelation of Identity**

The disciples' stunned question—"Who then is this?"—is Mark's invitation to see Jesus not merely as Rabbi or miracle-worker, but as Lord over nature itself.



## Jesus' Sovereignty Over Creation

Genesis 1:3-11, God speaks—"Let there be light," "Let the waters be gathered," "Let the earth bring forth vegetation"—and the cosmos obeys. By contrast, the Sea of Galilee, a small inland lake, could rage violently without warning. When Jesus rebukes "Wind, be still; and the sea, peace!" and the storm obeys instantly, He isn't merely exerting natural influence—He is exercising the same divine authority that declared the world into being.

### Why It Matters for Us:

- **Cosmic Lordship:** The One who spoke galaxies into existence is present in our boats. No force of nature—no crisis—lies outside His command.
- **Grounding Our Worship:** Knowing Jesus holds absolute power over creation reshapes our praise: He is not one teacher among many, but the Creator-King who governs every element of our lives.





## The Question of Faith

As the wind howled and waves cascaded into the vessel, the disciples' seasoned skill at fishing was worthless against the storm's fury. They panicked not because the storm was unprecedented, but because their focus had shifted from the One onboard to the sea around them. Jesus' piercing question—"Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?"—reveals that true security is rooted in His presence, not in external calm.


### Why It Matters for Us:

- **Faith vs. Fear:** Our spiritual stability is tested when life's "waves" swell—health scares, job loss, relational strife. The invitation isn't to extinguish the wind but to fix our eyes on Christ in the stern.
- **Habit of Trust:** Faith grows not in the absence of storms but in the repeated practice of turning our gaze from roaring troubles to the One who speaks peace.





# Revelation of Identity

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- Until this moment, the disciples had experienced Jesus' miracles of healing, feeding, and teaching—but never had they witnessed Him master the elements. Their awestruck question—"Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"—marks a pivotal point in Mark's Gospel. It reframes Jesus from "rabbi" or "prophet" to "Lord of nature," inviting readers to acknowledge His divine identity.
  - Why It Matters for Us:
    - – A Deeper Confession: Encountering Jesus' authority over creation calls for more than admiration; it demands allegiance. He is not merely a moral example but the sovereign Lord over every domain of life.
    - – Shaping Our Response: Recognizing Christ's true identity reshapes our worship, our devotion, and our willingness to follow wherever He leads—even onto the stormiest waters.

# Application for Christians Today



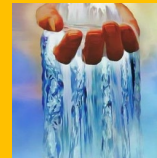
## Storms as Faith-Forming Moments

“Life’s sudden crises (health scares, financial emergencies, relational breakdowns) can feel like a capsizing storm. Rather than awaken Jesus in anxiety, we’re called to remember His presence—even when He seems “asleep.”



## Invitation to Deeper Trust

Jesus challenges us: “Have you still no faith?” Modern believers can cultivate peace not by eliminating problems, but by fixing our eyes on Him in prayer and Scripture.



## Worship Through Wonder

The disciples responded to the calm with fear—and worship. When we recognize Christ’s supremacy, our natural reaction shifts from panic to reverent awe and praise.



## Community Encouragement

Just as the disciples cried out together, congregations can bear one another’s fears in prayer groups, reminding each other of Jesus’ power to still any storm.

# Bringing It Together

**Mark 4:35-41** is not only a gripping rescue story but also a richly layered theological portrait.

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In one dramatic episode, Mark presents Jesus as Creator-King, challenges our misplaced security, and unveils His true identity.

**For modern Christians, the message is clear:**

the storms we face are opportunities for encountering the One whose voice stills both sea and soul—and whose lordship demands our unwavering faith and worship.



# Discussion Questions



1. What “storms” today feel beyond your control?
2. How does remembering God’s past faithfulness fuel present trust?
3. In what ways can our group “comfort” one another in peril?



## SESSION 3

# Guidance from the Holy Spirit When Our Minds Are Troubled

John 14:15–27

Philippians 4:6–9

Presented By – Brother Ernest Fisher



# The Importance of Always Seeking Guidance From The Holy Spirit When Our Minds Are Troubled

In moments when our minds swirl with anxiety, doubt, or confusion, we may feel adrift—longing for clarity, peace, and a sure guide. The New Testament assures us that the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus promised as our “Advocate” and “Helper,” is ever-present to lead, comfort, and counsel us (John 14:16–17, 26). Yet knowing intellectually that the Spirit is with us does not always translate into experiencing His gentle guidance amid life’s cacophony.

This brief exploration, *Guidance from the Holy Spirit When Our Minds Are Troubled*, will draw upon biblical promises and practical practices to help you recognize and respond to the Spirit’s voice. You will discover how prayer, Scripture meditation, and a heart posture of listening can open your inner ear to His wisdom, bring calm to racing thoughts, and empower you to navigate challenges with divine insight. May this preface spark a renewed expectancy for the Spirit’s leading—and a deeper trust in His unfailing presence.

## John 14:15–27

15 “If you love me, keep my commands.

16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever

17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be[a] in you.

18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

19 Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.

20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.

21 Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.”

22 Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?”

23 Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.

24 Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

25 “All this I have spoken while still with you.

26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.





# Historical and Literary Context Of John 14:15–27

## Jesus' Farewell Discourse

On the night before His crucifixion, Jesus gathers His disciples for a final “farewell discourse” (John 13–17). He knows His hour has come (John 13:1) and that they face imminent heartbreak and confusion.

Promise of the Advocate: In response to their looming loss, Jesus promises another Helper—the Holy Spirit—who will:

1. Come in His name (v. 26), carrying His teaching and reminding them of every word He spoke.
2. Indwell them (“I will not leave you as orphans,” v. 18), ensuring they never walk alone.
3. Bring peace (v. 27), distinguishing the Spirit’s gift from the fragile “peace” the world offers.



# Theological Themes

- **Presence Over Panic:**

John 14: The Spirit is promised precisely so we never face trials alone. When anxiety mounts, we have an Advocate living within us to counsel, comfort, and remind us of Jesus' words.

- **Prayer as Portal to Peace:**

Philippians 4: Through prayer and thanksgiving we exchange turmoil for God's watchful peace. This peace comes, not by human grit, but as the Spirit translates our petitions into God's perfect provision.

- **Thought Discipline:**

The Spirit shepherds our minds away from destructive rumination (fear, self-doubt) toward truths that reflect Christ's character and promises (what is "true, honorable, just, pure, lovely," Phil 4:8).

- **Obedience & Relationship:**

Loving Jesus and keeping His commands (John 14:15–17) isn't legalism but the pathway to deeper intimacy—where the Spirit can guide us with ever-greater clarity.





## Presence Over Panic

- **Centering Scripture:** Before you even get out of bed, quietly repeat a verse like “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Heb. 13:5) to remind yourself of Christ’s constant presence.
- **“Jesus in the Room” Check-In:** When anxiety hits, pause for 30 seconds, close your eyes, and say aloud, “Jesus, I know You’re here with me.” Let that truth soak in before reacting.
- **Breath Prayer:** As the wind of worry rises, inhale while thinking, “Holy Spirit,” then exhale, “fill me,” anchoring your awareness in His nearness.

## Prayer as Portal to Peace

- **A-Z Gratitude List:** Each morning or evening, write 5–10 things from A to Z for which you’re thankful, then offer one-sentence prayers of thanks for each. This reframes your heart before the day begins (or before sleep).
- **“Stoplight” Prayer Breaks:** Whenever you hit a red light (or any unexpected pause), use it to pray briefly: “Father, I lift this next meeting/fear to You.” Over time, these micro-prayers become second nature.
- **Prayer Journal “Safe Space”:** Keep a dedicated notebook. Pour out your worries in writing, then write a short prayer asking God to guard your heart (Phil. 4:6–7). Date each entry so you can later trace how He answers.



# TAKING THOUGHTS CAPTIVE

## Thought Discipline

- **Scripture Re-frames:** When a negative thought arises (“I’ll never get through this”), immediately recite a counter-truth (“I can do all things through Christ,” Phil. 4:13).
- **Philippians 4:8 “Scan & Replace”:** Pause for a minute and mentally scan what you’ve been dwelling on. For any thought not “true, honorable, just...pure,” replace it with a truth from Scripture.
- **“Mind Watch” Alarm:** Set a daily reminder on your phone that simply says, “What are you thinking?” Use it to re-align wandering thoughts with God’s Word.

## Obedience & Relationship to Christ

- **Daily “Yes” to the Spirit:** Each morning, ask the Lord to highlight one small act of obedience—e.g., a forgiving word, an extra hour of sleep, a generosity gesture—and commit to obeying it before checking your phone.
- **Accountability Pair:** Partner with a friend to share weekly “Spirit nudges” and report back how you responded—building both obedience and community encouragement.
- **Moment-by-Moment Surrender:** Throughout your day (in meetings, while cooking, on the road), practice a quick “Jesus, I’m Yours” prayer before each new activity—turning even the mundane into an act of worship.

# Application for Christians Today



## Cultivate Prayerful Awareness

“When you sense anxiety rising, pause and pour out your concerns (Phil 4:6). Invite the Spirit—your ever-present Counselor—to speak His calming truth into your heart.



## Memorize & Meditate on Scripture

Store key promises (e.g., “I will not leave you as orphans,” John 14:18) so the Spirit can remind you when troubles come.



## Practice “Thought Audits”

Regularly evaluate your mental diet against Philippians 4:8. Replace news-driven fear or self-criticism with God’s faithful promises.



## Worship in Community

Gather with other believers to pray, sing, and share testimony. Corporate worship invites the Spirit to minister peace not only individually but across the body.



# Bringing It Together

**John 14:15–27** assures us that the Holy Spirit is our indwelling Advocate—teaching, comforting, and granting peace.

**Philippians 4:6–9** shows us how to cooperate with that promise through prayer, thanksgiving, and focused thought. Together, they equip Christians today to navigate mental and emotional storms by relying on the Spirit's guidance rather than our own unaided strength.





# Discussion Questions

1. How have you sensed (or not sensed) the Spirit's voice in daily decisions?
2. What "troubled thoughts" do you wrestle with?
3. How can Philippians 4:8 guide our media, conversations, and focus?



SESSION 4

# Cultivating Gratitude When Life Seems Still

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Luke 10:38–42

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

Presented By: Brother Lamar Horton



# The Importance of Always Cultivating Gratitude When Life Seems Still

In the quiet seasons of life—when routines grow monotonous, ambitions stall, or outward change seems distant—our hearts can slip into apathy or discontent. Yet even in these “still waters,” Scripture calls us to a posture of thanksgiving: “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances” (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18).

Cultivating gratitude amid calm can be counterintuitive, but it is precisely in these moments that our faith is deepened, and our perspective transformed. Through stories like Mary’s choice to sit at Jesus’ feet (Luke 10:38–42) and Paul’s exhortation to thankfulness regardless of circumstance, this study on Cultivating Gratitude When Life Seems Still will guide you into practices that awaken a thankful heart—turning stillness into a sacred space for recognizing God’s daily goodness and grace.



Luke 10:38–42 and 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 together offer a rich biblical framework for learning to give thanks—even when life feels “quiet” or uneventful. In this lesson we unpack each passage’s original setting and then show how they converge on the call to cultivate gratitude in stillness.

<sup>38</sup> As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home.

<sup>39</sup> Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord’s feet, listening to what he taught.

<sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, “Lord, doesn’t it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me.”

<sup>41</sup> But the Lord said to her,  
“My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these de  
tails!

<sup>42</sup> There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary  
has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her.”



# Historical and Literary Context Of Luke 10:38–42

1. **Setting:** Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem, stopping at the home of two sisters, Mary and Martha, in Bethany.
2. **Contrast:** Martha's busyness ("much serving") versus Mary's focused devotion ("sat at the Lord's feet").
3. **Key Insight:** Jesus affirms that while service is valuable, it must flow out of a heart that first rests in His presence.



# Theological Themes

*Luke 10:38–42 warns us against letting busyness crowd out devotion, while 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 enjoins us to cultivate joy, prayer, and gratitude as God’s will—especially in quiet seasons. Together, they teach that true thankful hearts emerge not in spite of stillness but because we choose to rest and rejoice in the Presence of Christ.*

## Relation to “Cultivating Gratitude When Life Seems Still”

- **Stillness Over Activity:** In seasons of unremarkable routine —when there’s “nothing urgent to do”—we can grow restless (like Martha) instead of resting in Christ.
- **Gratitude in Presence:** Mary’s posture models gratitude: she simply sits, listens, and thanks Jesus by giving Him her full attention.



TOO BUSY FOR GOD



## Relation to “Cultivating Gratitude When Life Seems Still”

- **Rejoice Always:** Even when days feel repetitive or dull, joy is a choice rooted in God’s character rather than external circumstances.
- **Pray Without Ceasing:** An ongoing conversation with God transforms routine moments into opportunities for thanksgiving.
- **Give Thanks in All Circumstances:** Gratitude isn’t contingent on excitement; it flourishes when we intentionally praise God in the “ordinary” and the “uneventful.”

# Rejoice Always

- **Morning “Victory Playlist”**
  - Start each day with 5 minutes of upbeat worship or praise music. Let the melodies and lyrics shift your mood before you check email or headlines.
- **“One Good Thing” Share**
  - Text or tell a friend one small blessing you noticed today—a good cup of coffee, a bird at your window, a kind word. Rejoicing becomes contagious.
- **Gratitude Walks**
  - Take a 10-minute stroll around the block, naming aloud three things you’re thankful for as you see them: trees, sunshine, neighbors waving.

A black silhouette of a person standing with their back to the viewer, arms raised in a gesture of prayer or praise. The background is a warm, yellowish-orange gradient, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The person's right arm is raised higher than their left arm.

# Pray Without Ceasing

- **Breath Prayers**
  - Synchronize prayer with breathing: inhale “Jesus,” exhale “have mercy,” or choose a short phrase (e.g. “Thank You,” “Holy Spirit”). This prayer can run all day.
- **Prayer “Sticky-Note” Stations**
  - Place sticky notes in key spots (mirror, steering wheel, computer monitor) that simply say “Pray”—a quick cue to lift your next thought to God.
- **Hands-Free Prayer Loops**
  - Use a prayer-reminder app or set periodic phone alarms labeled “Pray!”—then pause for 30 seconds to pray for whatever’s on your heart or whoever comes to mind.



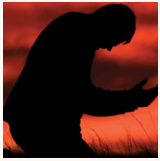


# Give Thanks in All Circumstances

grateful  
in *any*  
circumstance

- **Gratitude Jar**
  - Keep a jar and slips of paper on your kitchen counter. Each evening jot one thank-you note—big or small—and drop it in. At month's end, read them aloud.
- **“Thank-You” Text Marathon**
  - Challenge yourself to send five brief thank-you texts in a day: to a co-worker, neighbor, family member, or service provider (barista, mail carrier). Multiply small thanks.
- **Re-frame the Tough Stuff**
  - When you face a setback, ask: “What can I be thankful for in this?”—then list at least one glimmer (lesson learned, character growth, unexpected kindness).

# Application for Christians Today



## Create “Mary Moments”

Set aside 10 minutes daily to sit in silence before Christ—no tasks, just listening and saying “thank You.”



## Joyful Reminders

Place sticky notes in routine spaces (bathroom mirror, refrigerator) with one-word prompts: “Rejoice,” “Pray,” “Give Thanks.”



## Thanksgiving Prayer Breaks

Use transition times (before meetings, between classes) to whisper quick prayers of thanks—praising God even in the pauses.



## Corporate Practice

In small groups or worship services, designate a “gratitude segment” for members to share how God has been faithful in everyday moments.

# Bringing It Together

## Luke 10:38–42

Let's rise above all the noise and pursuits of this world and seek those things which have eternal value. Like Mary, let's find that fellowship with the Master and with those who follow Him so that we can learn of Him and become like Him. Through the Word of God, fellowship, and prayer we become rich in our spirit, and God will give us everything we need in abundance.

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By weaving these simple practices into your daily routine, you'll train your heart to rejoice, pray, and give thanks—even when nothing dramatic is happening—so that gratitude becomes the steady backdrop of your Christian life.



# Discussion Questions



1. When has “busyness” kept you from simply sitting with Jesus?
2. What small gifts is God giving you that you tend to ignore?
3. How can gratitude reshape your outlook in “dry seasons”?



SESSION 5

# Waiting on God's Timing & Blessings

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John 11:1–44

Isaiah 40:28–31

Presented By: Brother Marcus Ray



# The Importance of Always Waiting on God's Timing And Blessings

Waiting on God's timing often feels like standing in a silent room, watching the clock tick past our prayers and hopes. Yet Scripture reassures us that God's delays are never denials, but moments in which His sovereign purposes are being fulfilled (Isaiah 40:28–31; John 11:1–44).

As we explore the discipline of Waiting on God's Timing & Blessings, we will learn to anchor our souls in His unchanging character, cultivate patient hope in seasons of uncertainty, and recognize His life-giving power when He arrives—sometimes in unexpected ways—to answer beyond what we dare imagine. May this study equip you to embrace the “in-between” with confidence, knowing that the God who never grows weary is at work in every pause.



**John 11:1-14** - This passage teaches us about the importance of trusting in Jesus' timing. Although Martha and Mary were distraught over the delay, Jesus had a greater purpose in mind. Sometimes, God's timing may not align with our own, but we can trust that He has a plan and that He will work all things together for good.

1 Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.

2 (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.)

3 So, the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick."

4 When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it."

5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

6 So, when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days,

7 and then he said to his disciples, "**Let us go back to Judea.**"

8 "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?"

9 Jesus answered, "**Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world's light.**

10 **It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light.**"

11 After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "**Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.**"

12 His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better."

13 Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

14 So then he told them plainly, "**Lazarus is dead,**

15 **and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.**"

**John 11:32-44** - This passage serves as a reminder that God's timing may not always align with our expectations, but it is always for a higher purpose. We can let go of our need for immediate answers and surrender to God's divine plan with patience and faith by trusting in His timing. Cultivating a heart of faith and reliance on God requires us to deepen our trust in His timing.

<sup>32</sup> Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

<sup>33</sup> When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled.

<sup>34</sup> And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see."

<sup>35</sup> Jesus wept.

<sup>36</sup> So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"

<sup>37</sup> But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?"

<sup>38</sup> Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it.

<sup>39</sup> Jesus said, "Take away the stone."

<sup>40</sup> Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?"


<sup>41</sup> So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me.

<sup>42</sup> I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.

<sup>43</sup> When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out."

<sup>44</sup> The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."





# Historical and Literary Context Of John 11: 1–44

1. **Lazarus' Illness & Death:** Mary and Martha send word to Jesus that their brother Lazarus is sick. Jesus delays His departure for two days—Lazarus dies in the interim.
2. **Jesus' Timing:** Although Lazarus' death seems like a tragedy, Jesus declares the delay “for the glory of God” (11:4) and to deepen the disciples' faith.
3. **Resurrection Power:** Standing at the tomb, Jesus weeps (11:35) then commands, “Lazarus, come out!” (11:43). The dead man emerges, wrapped in burial cloths—a foretaste of Jesus' own resurrection.

# Theological Themes

**Isaiah 40:29–31** - 29 He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. 30 Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; 31 but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

## Relation to “Wait on God’s Timing and Blessings”

- **Exilic Encouragement:** Israel was in Babylonian exile, feeling abandoned and powerless. Isaiah reminds them that the Creator—unchallenged by time or circumstance—sustains those who wait on Him.
- **Waiting Defined:** Not passive resignation, but active hope—confidence in God’s character (“everlasting,” “unfainting”) and covenant faithfulness.
- **Promise of Renewal:** Waiting produces elevated perspective (“wings like eagles”), endurance (“run and not be weary”), and sustained footing (“walk and not faint”).
- **Lazarus’ Illness & Death:** Mary and Martha send word to Jesus that their brother Lazarus is sick. Jesus delays His departure for two days—Lazarus dies in the interim.
- **Jesus’ Timing:** Although Lazarus’ death seems like a tragedy, Jesus declares the delay “for the glory of God” (11:4) and to deepen the disciples’ faith.
- **Resurrection Power:** Standing at the tomb, Jesus weeps (11:35) then commands, “Lazarus, come out!” (11:43). The dead man emerges, wrapped in burial cloths—a foretaste of Jesus’ own resurrection.



# Leaning into God's Promises of Renewal (Isaiah 40:28–31)

## “Renewal Journal” Ritual

- **What to Do:** Keep a running list of times when God sustained you in weariness—big or small.
- **Why It Helps:** Recording answered prayers and moments of fresh strength trains your heart to expect renewal, even before the next trial arrives.

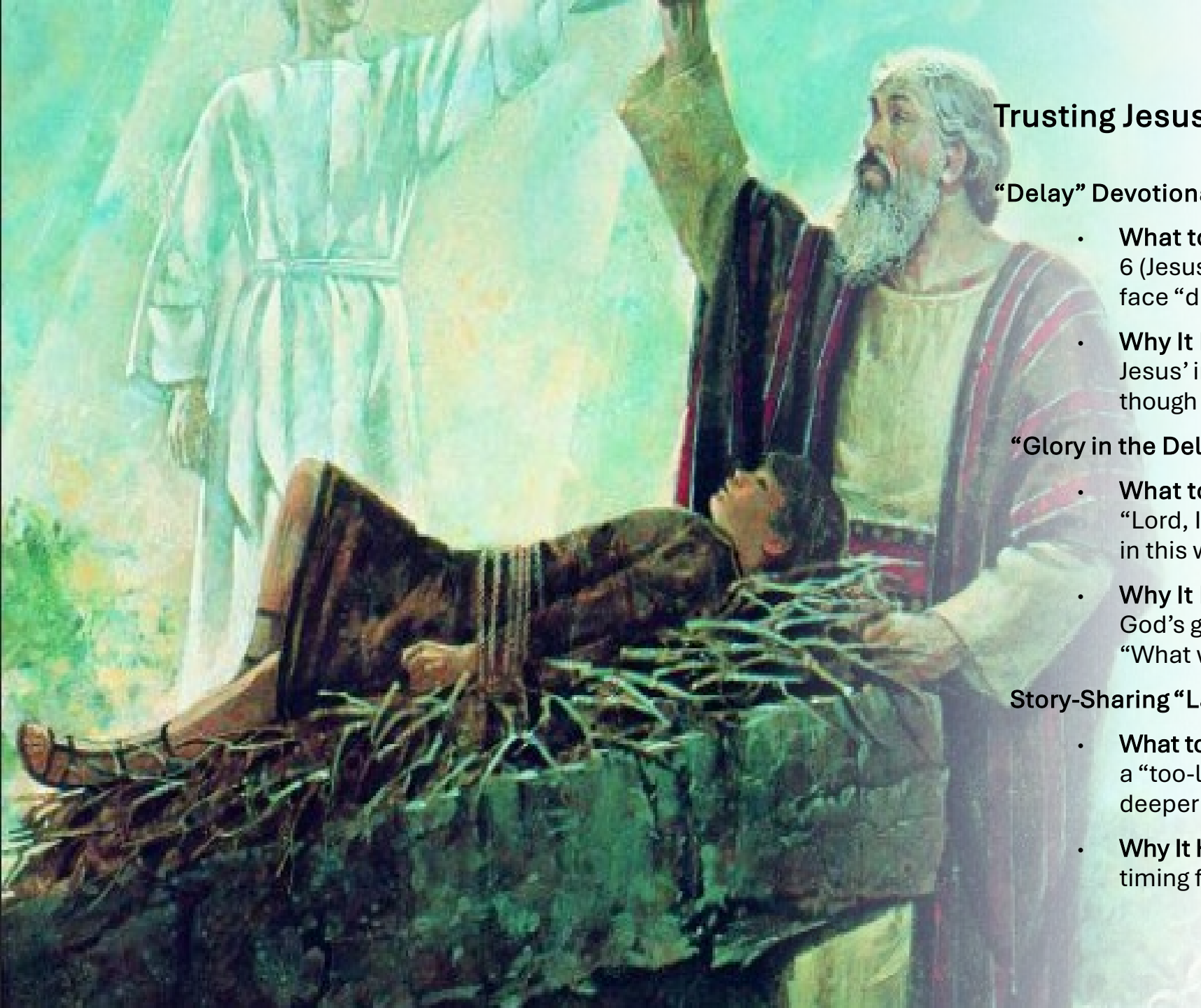
## “Eagle’s Wings” Meditation

- **What to Do:** Choose the phrase “They who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength” and meditate on it 5–10 minutes each morning—letting it shape your outlook for the day.
- **Why It Helps:** Repeated meditation replaces anxious first thoughts with confident reminders of God’s inexhaustible power.

## Community “Strength Swap”

- **What to Do:** In your small group, take turns sharing a current “waiting season” request, then pray Isaiah 40:31 over each other—proclaiming God’s promise of renewed strength.
- **Why It Helps:** Verbalizing both need and promise activates faith collectively, reinforcing that no one waits alone.





## Trusting Jesus' Timing in Lazarus' Death (John 11)

### “Delay” Devotional Reflection

- **What to Do:** Read John 11 weekly, focusing on verses 1–6 (Jesus delays). Journal your honest feelings when you face “divine delays”—fear, frustration, hope.
- **Why It Helps:** Naming your emotions in the light of Jesus’ intentional delay deepens trust that His timing—though mysterious—is always redemptive.

### “Glory in the Delay” Prayer Practice

- **What to Do:** When you sense an answer is late, pray: “Lord, I trust Your delay has a purpose. Shine Your glory in this waiting.”
- **Why It Helps:** Framing waiting as an opportunity for God’s glory shifts your focus from “Why so late?” to “What will He do next?”

### Story-Sharing “Lazarus Moments”

- **What to Do:** Invite friends or family to share a time when a “too-late” answer led to an unexpected blessing or deeper faith.
- **Why It Helps:** Hearing living examples of Jesus’ perfect timing fuels your own hope in the “in-between.”





# Embracing Resurrection Power (John 11:38–44)

## “Resurrection Affirmations”

- **What to Do:** Memorize and speak aloud statements like “Jesus is the resurrection and the life” whenever discouragement creeps in.
- **Why It Helps:** Affirmations activate your faith in Christ’s power to bring life out of death—emotionally, spiritually, or circumstantially.

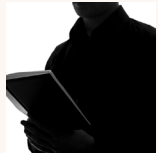
## Symbolic “Tomb-to-Life” Exercise

- **What to Do:** Write a current struggle on a slip of paper and place it in an empty box or “tomb.” Pray over it, then ceremonially remove it after declaring Jesus’ victory—symbolizing His power to new-life your situation.
- **Why It Helps:** This tangible ritual reinforces belief that no circumstance is beyond Christ’s resurrecting reach.

## “Witness to Resurrection” Outreach

- **What to Do:** Partner with a friend to seek out someone in a “dead-end” situation (loneliness, addiction, illness), share John 11’s hope, pray for them, and follow up.
- **Why It Helps:** Serving as an emissary of resurrection power not only encourages others but cements in your heart the reality that Christ still raises the dead to life.

# Application for Christians Today



## Anchor Yourself in a Daily “Pause”

Carve out a fixed 10–15 minutes each morning or evening—no screens, no agenda—just you, God’s Word, and quiet. Creating a regular “pause” interrupts the frenzy of constant notifications and reminds you that your worth and direction come from Christ, not from your to-do list.



## Keep a “Waiting Journal”

Record your specific requests, along with the date you first prayed them. Every week, note any small signs of God’s work or shifts in your heart—answered prayers, fresh insights, or unexpected opportunities. Tracking both progress and prayer “tugs” builds patience by showing how God is at work, even when the big breakthrough hasn’t come yet.



## Partner with an Accountability “Wait-Mate”

Find one trusted believer to share your waiting-season requests with. Agree to pray for each other daily, check in weekly, and celebrate any signs of God’s faithfulness together. Waiting in isolation can breed discouragement. A “wait-mate” offers prayer support, encouragement, and the reminder that you’re not alone—strengthening your resolve to trust God’s perfect timing.



## Engage in “Active Waiting” Through Service

While you wait on your own blessing, commit to a regular act of service—a mentoring hour, feeding the homeless, or volunteering at your church. Serving others reorients your focus from “When will God act for me?” to “How can I reflect His love now?” This both sharpens your faith and readies you to steward any blessing He sends.

# Bringing It Together

## Isaiah 40:28–31

Waiting on the Lord is not wasted time but sacred preparation for His life-giving work. Isaiah teaches us to soar on “wings like eagles” through patient hope; John reveals that even the hardest delays—death itself—are preludes to resurrection power in Christ.

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By weaving these practices into your daily routine—sacred pauses, journaling, service, and peer support—you’ll cultivate a faith that stands firm, not despite the world’s fast pace, but because you’ve learned to wait on the One who orders every moment.



# Discussion Questions



1. What are you currently “waiting” for in work, family, or faith?
2. How do you handle discouragement during long waits?
3. What practical rhythms (fasting, journaling, service) help you wait well?



## SESSION 6

# Following Jesus as Disciples Who Serve Others— Even in Need

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John 13:1–17

Philippians 2:1–11

Presented By: Brother Harold Ray, Jr.



# The Importance of Always Following Jesus as Disciples Who Serve Others – Even In Need

The call to follow Jesus extends far beyond belief—it summons us into a life marked by humble service, even when our own needs press in. From the Upper Room to the cross, Jesus modeled for His disciples that true greatness is measured not by status but by willingness to stoop low (John 13:1–17). Yet in the rhythms of modern life—balancing career pressures, family responsibilities, and personal struggles—it can feel impossible to pour out for others when we ourselves thirst.

This study on Following Jesus as Disciples Who Serve Others – Even In Need invites you to step into the tension of giving and receiving grace. Drawing on the apostle Paul’s reliance on Christ’s sufficiency in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9–10) and the early church’s commitment to mutual care (Acts 2:44–47), we will explore how our frail strength becomes the stage for God’s power and love to shine. May these pages encourage you that, as you serve from your own vulnerability, you embody the very heart of the gospel—and discover that in Christ, giving and receiving are two sides of the same blessing.



**John 13:1-10** - Significantly, this intimate scene prefigures the cross: the One who washes feet will soon lay down His life to wash away sin. For Christians today, John 13:1–10 remains a clarion call to embody servant-love in every relationship—welcoming the Savior’s cleansing forgiveness and offering humble, compassionate care to all around us.

1 It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

2 The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus.

3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God;

4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist.

5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?”

7 Jesus replied, “You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.”

8 “No,” said Peter, “you shall never wash my feet.” Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.”

9 “Then, Lord,” Simon Peter replied, “not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!”

10 Jesus answered, “Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.”





**John 13:11-17** - Jesus promises blessing for those who embrace this path of obedient love: “If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.” For Christians today, John 13:11–17 isn’t merely a historic footnote but an enduring charge: to serve sacrificially, to love without calculation, and to lead by gentle example, confident that such humility honors the One who came not to be served, but to serve.

11 For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not everyone was clean.

12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them.

13 “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am.

14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet.

15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

16 Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.

17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.



# Historical and Literary Context

## Of

### John 13: 1-17

Jesus and His disciples are gathered for the Passover meal in the Upper Room on the eve of Jesus’ crucifixion. Tensions are high: Jesus has predicted His betrayal (John 13:21), and the disciples are uncertain and fearful about the events to come.

By washing His disciples’ feet—a task reserved for lowly servants—Jesus provides a living metaphor for the humility and mutual service that must characterize His followers. The narrative frames His crucifixion as the ultimate act of service (John 13:1 “He loved them to the end”).

- 1. **Contrast of Roles:** Teacher and Lord assumes the posture of slave (v. 4–5).
- 2. **Teaching by Example:** Jesus explicitly commands “You also ought to wash one another’s feet” (v. 14–15).
- 3. **Blessing in Obedience:** “If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them” (v. 17).



# Theological Themes

Mark 12:41–44 - 41 Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. 42 But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents. 43 **Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. 44 They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.”**

## Relation to “Following Jesus As Disciples Who Serve Others”

- **Reciprocal Care:** Cultivate community rhythms where giving and receiving flow freely—meal trains, care teams, prayer partnerships—so that serving never exhausts but continually circles back as mutual blessing.
- **Testimony of Dependence:** When you serve in your own trial—whether physical illness, financial strain, or emotional distress—narrate Christ’s faithfulness to those you help. Your vulnerability underscores the gospel power that lifts the weary.
- **Sacrificial Generosity:** Remember the widow’s mite (Mark 12:41–44): God treasures the heart behind the gift more than its size. Even a small act of kindness, offered in dependence on Him, becomes a potent sign of His kingdom’s upside-down economy.

# Reciprocal Care - Strengthens Authentic Community

## “Meal Trains” with Rotation

- **What to Do:** Create teams of three who commit to pray daily for one another’s needs and to trade small services (grocery pickup, light housekeeping) as needs arise—so that giving and receiving care flows evenly.
- **Why It Helps:** Breaks Isolation - Meal trains and time-bank teams ensure no one “suffers in silence,” countering the loneliness epidemic in our digital age.

## “Shared Childcare” Co-op

- **What to Do:** Form a small circle of parents who agree to look after each other’s children for an evening once a month, allowing each parent to rest, run errands, or serve without fear of neglecting their own needs.
- **Why It Helps:** Builds Trust - Regular give-and-take in childcare co-ops or errand help creates bonds of mutual reliance—mirroring the early church’s “all things in common” (Acts 2:44–47).

## “Time-Bank” Prayer & Errand Teams

- **What to Do:** Create teams of three who commit to pray daily for one another’s needs and to trade small services (grocery pickup, light housekeeping) as needs arise—so that giving and receiving care flows evenly.
- **Why It Helps:** Shared Spiritual Growth- When we see others both giving and receiving care, it normalizes vulnerability and encourages deeper honesty in faith circles.





# Testimony of Dependence

## “Vulnerability Sharing” in Life Groups

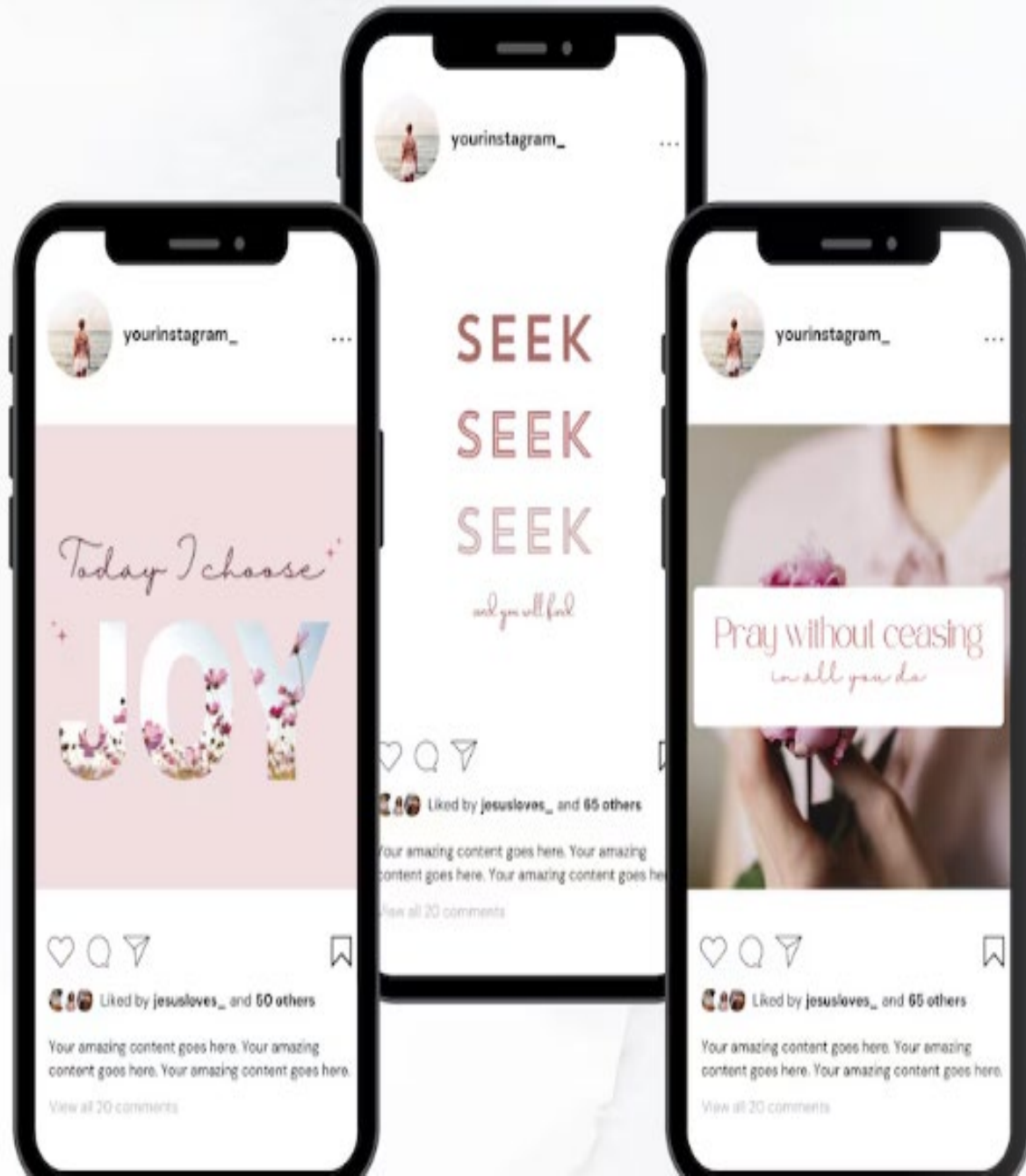
- **What to Do:** During a weekly small-group meeting, intentionally share one recent struggle and how you’ve seen God sustain you—then invite members to pray and offer encouragement, modeling that dependence on Christ isn’t weakness but authenticity.
- **Why It Helps:** Points to Christ - Publicly sharing “God-moments” or giving testimonies reminds us—and observers—that ultimate sufficiency comes from Jesus, not human effort.

## Social-Media “God-Moments” Posts

- **What to Do:** Post brief stories (or photos) of times you felt spiritually or emotionally spent yet experienced unexpected provision (a friend’s text, a scripture verse, a sunset) with a short note: “In my weakness, He was strong—#gracedependence.”
- **Why It Helps:** Encourages Hope - Hearing real stories of God’s provision amid weakness reassures struggling believers that God is active even when circumstances look bleak.

## “Testimony Slots”

- **What to Do:** Volunteer to give a 5-minute testimony during a church service or outreach event, recounting how you relied on God’s grace while serving others—encouraging the congregation to trust Him in their own “both-and” seasons.
- **Why It Helps:** Destigmatizes Need - Testimony of dependence reframes asking for prayer or help as an act of faith rather than a sign of spiritual failure.





# Sacrificial Generosity

## “Last Dollar Offering”

- **What to Do:** When you feel financially stretched, commit a small percentage (e.g., 1–2%) of your tightest month’s income to a benevolence fund—demonstrating trust that God will meet your needs even after you give.
- **Why It Helps:** Reorients Values - Sacrificial giving—even of “last dollars” or scarce time—pushes us beyond consumer-driven mindsets to a posture of trust and downside risk for God’s kingdom.

## “Hospitality in Hardship”

- **What to Do:** Invite a single friend or struggling family over for coffee or a simple meal—even if you’re on a tight budget—showing that generosity isn’t measured by abundance but by the willingness to share what you have.
- **Why It Helps:** Deepens Compassion - Hospitality in hardship and skill-sharing put us face-to-face with neighbors’ real needs, sharpening Christ’s heart for the poor and marginalized.

## “Skill-Sharing in Need”

- **What to Do:** Offer free use of your gifts (tutoring, car maintenance, resume help) to someone in your community while you yourself are juggling commitments—trusting God to replenish your time and energy as you extend help.
- **Why It Helps:** Multiplies Impact - Small, consistent acts of generosity ripple outward—encouraging recipients to “pay it forward” and creating a culture of Christ-like self-giving.

# Application for Christians Today



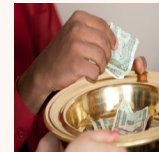
## “Neighbor-Swap” Support Circles

Form a small group of 4–6 church members who commit to praying for one another’s needs and swapping practical help on a rotating basis. For example, if Member A needs a ride to an appointment, Member B drives; next week, Member C receives help with yard work from Member D, and so on.



## “God-Moment” Micro-Stories

Keep a monthly “God-Moments” note on your phone. Whenever you feel especially weak or anxious—then sense God’s comfort or provision—jot a 2–3-sentence note describing what happened and how you sensed His help. Once a month, share one of these micro-testimonies in your small group or on social media.



## “Last-Dollar” Tithe Challenge

For one month, commit to giving 1–2% of your smallest paycheck to a benevolence fund or charitable cause. Track it alongside your regular budget and resist the urge to “make up” the difference elsewhere.



## Weekly “Sabbath Pause”

Block out a two-hour slot each week—no work, no screens. Use the time for:

1. Silent Prayer & Meditation
2. Journaling
3. Praise and Worship
4. Restful Activity



# Bringing It Together

## John 13:1–17

At the heart of Christian discipleship lies the paradox that Christ's followers are called to serve others most profoundly when they themselves are in need. In "Grace-Fueled Service," discipleship becomes less about our capability and more about God's glory—drawing others not to our strength, but to Christ's sufficiency in us.

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By putting these into practice—caring for one another, sharing God's faithfulness, giving sacrificially, and intentionally pausing for spiritual renewal—you'll cultivate a lifestyle of humble service and resilient dependence on Christ, even amid your own needs.





# Discussion Questions

1. When have you felt “unworthy” to serve, yet served anyway?
2. How can we spot needs around us and put ourselves second?
3. In what ways do you need others’ help—and how does that challenge your independence?

# Anchored in Christ

A 6-Week Men's Journey Through Trust, Faith & Servant-Leadership

Prepared by:

KICKING KNOWLEDGE WITH....

