

FIRST 2017

CREATED TO

A Gateway Devotional

CREATED TO BE

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CREATED TO





CREATED TO BE

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PREFACE



Did you know God created you with a purpose? And did you know you have a part to play in His kingdom here on earth? At Gateway, we want you to experience all God has for you and live out your God-given purpose. This is the reason our mission is to help each person at Gateway believe in Jesus, belong to family, become a follower, and build God's kingdom.

BELIEVE IN JESUS

Believing in Jesus means placing your hope and trust in Him by surrendering to His lordship in every area of your life. When we first believe in Jesus, we receive eternal life, but it isn't just a one-time thing. 1 John 5:14 says, "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may *continue* to believe in the name of the Son of God." God created us to believe Him first and God created us to believe Him last. Believing Him first is how we receive eternal life. Believing Him last

is how we receive abundant life. As we continue believing in every area of our lives, we receive eternal and abundant life.

BELONG TO FAMILY

Belonging to family means developing meaningful friendships with others who love Jesus and walking through life together by loving, helping, and protecting each other. We were all born rejected. In fact, Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." But here's the good news, once we receive salvation, we're *born again* and accepted into His family! Because of Jesus' sacrifice, we now belong to God, who calls us to belong to each other. When two people are married, they must continue working on their marriage. Likewise, when we're part of a church family, we have to actively participate by attending services, joining small groups, taking part in classes, and being in relationship with others.

BECOME A FOLLOWER

Becoming a follower means shifting the focus of your life from being self-centered

to Christ-centered by doing what Jesus would do and loving as He would love. Is there anyone who has *finally* become like Jesus? No! But as we grow in our faith, we are becoming more and more like Him every day. The best example He gives us is recorded in John 13 when Jesus washes the disciples' feet and later when He dies on the cross. Becoming a follower doesn't mean improving our status in life. It means denying ourselves and picking up our cross to become more like Him. This doesn't just happen once—we have to do it daily.

BUILD GOD'S KINGDOM

Building God's kingdom means submitting to God to be His hands and feet to those around us by giving of ourselves and serving others. Now when I say giving, you might think I'm talking about finances. That's part of it, but when I talk about giving, I'm referring to so much more. I'm talking about giving in our relationships, giving in our faith, giving in our worship. Giving comes from an attitude of the heart, and it's the best way we can build God's kingdom. God is a builder, and because we're made in His image, we're called to be builders too.

As we incorporate this mission into our lives, we begin a process of discovering our purpose here on earth. And it's important to remember these aren't things we do once, they're things we must continue to do each day.

That's why this devotional, *Created to Be*, is so important to understanding your role at Gateway and in God's kingdom. Each day emphasizes how we are created to *be*, not *do*. God created human *beings*, not human *doings*. If we will simply be what He created us to be, then we will naturally do what He wants us to do. It's then that we find our purpose.

As you read through this devotional over the next 28 days, I hope you'll be encouraged and inspired on your journey of discovering whom God created you to be.



Pastor Robert Morris

*Our mission is to help each person at Gateway **believe** in Jesus, **belong** to family, **become** a follower, and **build** God's kingdom.*

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Believing in Jesus means placing your hope and trust in Him by surrendering to His lordship in every area of your life.

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**BELIEVE
IN
JESUS**

*Believing in Jesus means placing your hope and trust in Him
by surrendering to His lordship in every area of your life.*

CREATED TO BE | BELIEVE IN JESUS

Day **One**

Day 01

BELIEVE IN THE LORD JESUS

by Jelani Lewis

“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, along with everyone in your household.”

Acts 16:30–31 (NLT)

B

“But Jesus is in my stomach!”

That was how our two-year-old daughter responded when my wife lovingly tried to explain Jesus would watch over her as she slept that night. If Jesus lives inside of her—right next to the fruit snacks in her belly, apparently—how could He watch over her at the same time? It was all a little too much for this toddler to comprehend.

I chuckle when I think about this story, and I credit my pre-K'er for grasping a simple yet profound truth. Jesus wants to

be more than a historical figure we read about. He wants to be real to us, to relate to us, to live in us.

So how does one receive salvation? Acts 16 records the story of Paul and Silas in prison. In my holy imagination, I can see them singing while incarcerated. God starts tapping his feet to the hip-hop beat and simultaneously creates an earthquake. Because of this incredible experience, the jailer in charge of the prison asked Paul and Silas a question. “Sirs, what must I do

to be saved?" (Acts 16:30, NLT). Their response was simple and clear: "Believe in the Lord Jesus" (Acts 16:31, NLT).

That's it. Five words. There's no special clause demanding he stop doing all the bad stuff and start doing all the good stuff. These early saints simply taught if you want to receive the free gift of salvation, all you have to do is believe in the Lord Jesus. The truth is these five words are transformative. You see, to believe means we place our trust in the finished work of Christ. He died on a cross to pay for our sins (the actions and attitudes that don't meet God's standard) so we could receive forgiveness and experience eternal, abundant life.

Additionally, their reply includes Jesus' title: Lord. Why is this important? Because lordship communicates there is a new master, ruler, or leader. Lordship declares, "I'm no longer in charge, I surrender." Paul even echoes this in Romans 10:9 (NIV) where he writes, "If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Therefore, the jailer understood that salvation means both reception *and* surrender.

Think of it like this: Imagine you're about to receive a large gift from God. In order to receive it, you stand up and raise your hands to grasp it. From the front, it looks like you are receiving an immense present. From the back, it appears you are in a posture of surrender. *This is salvation.* It's you and me believing in Jesus, surrendering our lives to the lordship of Jesus Christ, and receiving His forgiveness, friendship, and future.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for loving me so much that You sent Jesus to die on a cross for me so I could be forgiven, so we could have friendship, and so I could spend forever with You in eternity. Today, I surrender my life to You and invite You to be my Lord, Savior, and friend. Thank You for new life, new hope, and a new future. In Jesus' name, Amen.

WHAT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT SAYING TO ME?

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FOR FURTHER STUDY

Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8–9; John 3:1–17

CREATED TO BE | BELIEVE IN JESUS

Day Two

Day 02

A FRIEND OF GOD

by Niles Holsinger

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.” John 15:4



Reverend George W. Gray was the senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Lexington, Missouri, for 21 years until he retired. He spent the rest of his life serving his small rural town, frequently making hospital visits and stopping by people's homes to pray for them. When Reverend Gray passed away, his funeral was not attended by thousands, only a hundred or so. When those who attended his funeral were asked what they remembered most about Reverend Gray, they all said the same thing. They didn't talk about his great preaching or his

leadership or his church management skills. They talked about how he prayed. Reverend Gray did not pray fancy, exuberant prayers. He prayed like a man who was talking to his best friend. When he prayed you knew God was listening, because *he* knew God was listening. He knew God, and God was his friend.

As a young pastor in my early twenties, this story made an incredible impact on me. It reordered the priorities of my life. I no longer wanted to pray just when I had a to-do list of things I needed or wanted from Him. I wanted to be a friend of God.

I wanted to talk with Him and hear from Him, a God who knew my name and whose voice I recognized. I left that service not only wanting to be a man who was used by God, but a man who was *friends* with God.

Like any friendship, our friendship with God will only grow as deep and intimate as the time we are willing to commit to it. It's amazing how many things we make time for in our lives that have so little eternal value, and consequently, we always find ourselves too busy for the Lord. The incredible beauty in committing time every day to speak to God and listen for His voice is He wants to spend time with us even more than we do with Him.

How often do we only communicate with God when we're in trouble or when we have a big decision to make? Of course He wants to help us, but even more than that, He just wants to talk with us every day, just like a friend would. In fact, He sent His Son to die so we could be friends with Him. John 15:15 says, "No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you."

The entire story of the Bible is the story of a Father pursuing His children, of God pursuing us. He wants to meet with you every day, anytime, wherever you are. Find the time. Make the commitment. Become friends with God.



PRAYER

Heavenly Father, here I am. I want to hear from You. I want to know You. I want to be Your friend. Speak to me, let me hear Your voice and know Your heart for me today, and every day. In Jesus' name, Amen.

WHAT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT SAYING TO ME?

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FOR FURTHER STUDY

Matthew 7:7; John 10:27; Romans 5:10

CREATED TO BE | BELIEVE IN JESUS

Day **Three**

Day 03

WHO ARE YOU, AND WHY ARE YOU HERE?

by Matt Hernandez

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Romans 10:17



There's an old story about a rabbi named Akiva who went to his village to gather supplies. Walking back to his cottage, he took the wrong path and ended up in an unfamiliar part of town. Suddenly, a voice came through the darkness: "Who are you, and why are you here?" Shocked, he realized he had wandered into the Roman garrison, and the voice had come from a young sentry keeping guard. Akiva answered his questions with another question: "How

much do they pay you to stand guard and ask that question?"

The sentry, seeing he was just a rabbi, answered meekly, "Five drachmas a week." At that point the rabbi said, "Young man, I will double your pay if you come with me, stand in front of my cottage, and ask me those questions each morning: 'Who are you, and why are you here?'"

I believe these are questions burning inside all of us. Deep in our bones we believe our life was made for more, so we're asking, seeking, and searching.

These two questions point me back to Jesus, which will always point me back to the Scriptures. In John 10:10, Jesus says, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” What I have found through reading the Scriptures is abundant life doesn’t just happen when we die, but Jesus offers it to us right here and now! The Gospel isn’t about Jesus coming to teach us how to get to Heaven but about Jesus coming to teach us how to live.

We come to this understanding by reading God’s Word daily. These sacred texts are more than just 2,000-year-old stories. They tell a larger story of a God who is living, breathing, and active, and He wants nothing more than to be living, breathing, and active in our lives. We, as followers of Jesus, have our part to play in this larger story. I once heard someone say the Bible is black words on a white page, and we get to fill the space in between with our story. We participate and make it personal by reading the Scriptures and allowing the Holy Spirit to speak to us through these sacred texts.

If we are all image bearers of God, then the more we come to know our Creator the more we know about ourselves and who we are in Him. It’s in this discipline that we discover our identity and our purpose. It’s in this holy moment when we can answer the questions, who am I, and why am I here?

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, through Your Word, I pray I come to a deeper understanding of who You are. Teach me the part You have called me to play in this larger story. Holy Spirit I am asking for You to show me through the Word who I am and why I am here. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

WHAT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT SAYING TO ME?

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FOR FURTHER STUDY

Psalm 139:14; John 15:1-17; Hebrews 4:12

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Day **Four**

Day 04

DISAPPOINTMENT TO DOUBT

by Chelsea Seaton

One of the twelve disciples, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), was not with the others when Jesus came. They told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he replied, “I won’t believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in his side.” John 20:24–25 (NLT)



Have you ever been so disappointed with God that it caused you to doubt Him? Maybe you’re believing a promise from Him, but you haven’t seen it come to fruition. Perhaps you’ve been through a tragedy that caused you to question His sovereignty. Or maybe you’ve prayed whole heartedly for something and it didn’t turn out the way you thought it would. If so, you’re not alone; I’ve been there too.

One of my favorite stories in the Bible is about Thomas. He was one of the twelve disciples who witnessed Jesus perform miracles. He saw Jesus feed the five thousand, heal the sick, give sight to the blind, and raise the dead! After witnessing all of these miracles, he must have had an incredible expectation for what Jesus could do. Thomas probably daydreamed about the day Jesus would be crowned king. He might have thought he would be one of

Jesus' royal subjects, living in a palace or teaching people in the synagogue. His heart was undoubtedly full of hopes and dreams. But as Jesus hung on the cross, I imagine all Thomas had hoped for died that day, leaving him confused and disappointed.

As we read in John 20, Thomas's disappointment led him to doubt, and I think the same thing happens with us. We've seen God move in awesome ways, but when something doesn't turn out the way we expect it to or the way we prayed it would, we get frustrated and all the things God has done seem null and void. We forget how good, loving, and compassionate He is. We forget that if He was faithful *then*, He will be faithful *now*. We forget that what He spoke in His Word is true—yesterday, today, and forever.

What should we do when we forget and begin to doubt? I think we should be like Thomas. He confessed his doubt and was honest about it. It was after he confessed that Jesus came through the doors, walked right up to him, and reached out His hand (John 20:26–27). He doesn't shame Thomas for doubting. He doesn't tell him how stupid he is for not believing. He reaches out His hand as if to say, "I'm here." Jesus offered Thomas comfort in the midst of his doubt, and when Thomas took the hand of Jesus, he believed.

If you're doubting today, confess it to the Lord, and ask Him to give you peace. When you're honest with God, He will walk through the door of your heart, reach out His hand, and comfort you. Take His hand and believe again.

PRAYER

Jesus, thank You for comforting me when I doubt You. Thank You for giving me Your Word, so I can go and read about who You are, remembering that You never change and Your Word is always true. Today, I put my trust and hope in You. I believe in You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

WHAT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT SAYING TO ME?

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FOR FURTHER STUDY

Matthew 21:21; Mark 9:21–24; John 20:24–29; Hebrews 13:8

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Day **Five**

Day 05

HE IS FAITHFUL

by Mallory Bassham

Cast your burden on the Lord and He shall sustain you. Psalm 55:22



Have you ever found it's easy to believe and trust God when all is well, everything is settled, and life is good? But when things get difficult, sometimes we wonder where God is. At some point or another, we all experience extremely tough times. I'm not talking about minor inconveniences, but gut-wrenching, tragic life events that shred us to the very core. They hit without warning and hijack our life, emotions, and faith.

I will never forget when my husband went to see our family doctor for a headache and ended up in the emergency room.

In one morning, he went from laying on the couch at home to laying on a hospital bed in the intensive care unit. My faith was really tested when I learned brain hemorrhages, like the one he had, are usually fatal. One week later, he came home and had no evidence of trauma. It was an absolute miracle! But the days while he was in the hospital were long, my heart was heavy, and my spirit was pressed into the heart of the Father, who truly sustained us.

In times like this, what we really believe becomes evident. We try to find purpose or a reason for what's happening and

ask ourselves what God is teaching us. Practically speaking, how do we walk through circumstances like this?

The Bible tells us to draw near to Him, and He will draw near to us (James 4:8). There are moments in life when we have to trust that, as we are vulnerable with our pain, He is faithful. He sent the Holy Spirit to walk with us. We have to believe He'll never let us go, and even when we can't see His hand, we can trust His heart.

It has to be a willful decision to have faith, be patient, and trust in His Word. When we are totally vulnerable before God, we find strength to take one more step. When our faith is put to the test, God's presence and Holy Spirit calm us, heal our hurts, and renew our strength. The key to receiving His renewed strength is to give Him the entire burden we carry. This happens as we spend time in His presence and in His Word. Our part is to press in honestly and trust Him, and His part is to sustain us (Psalm 55:22).

Whether you're facing a devastating situation or you feel overwhelmed in a certain area of life, you can run to the Heavenly Father and tell Him everything. He will carry your burden, and He will sustain you.



PRAYER

Thank You God for always being there and for giving us the Holy Spirit so we will never be alone. Help us when we experience difficult situations and times of despair and stumbling. Give us faith to continue to seek Your presence and hear Your voice. Thank You for being steady and dependable, our Rock, and our Redeemer. In Jesus' name, Amen.

CREATED TO BE | BELIEVE IN JESUS

Day Six

Day 06

IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBILITIES

by Zach Neese

But Jesus looked at them and said to them “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” *Matthew 19:26*



One of my favorite lines in literature comes from *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*: “Why, sometimes I’ve believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast.” Why do I love that quote so much? Because sometimes it’s easier to believe for impossibilities than possibilities. When we pray for something we know is possible, we tend to fret over the “how.” *How will God answer this prayer?* When I pray for impossibilities, I am unconcerned with the “how” because when something is impossible, the only option is a miracle. God *has* to

do it or it won’t get done. I have to stop believing in the “how,” and start believing in the “who”—my Father.

Some years ago, we were at a party and my 18-month-old daughter, Maggie, toddled fully dressed into a swimming pool. I didn’t see her go in, but my daughter Charis did, and she immediately dove in to save her baby sister. The problem was that Charis was only three years old, and she couldn’t swim either! When I got to the edge of the pool, I was met with a terrifying sight: my precious little girls staring up at me, a foot under water. In one hand

Charis gripped her little sister's jacket, and with the other she was pulling against the water—stretching toward the surface with every ounce of her inadequate strength.

Was there ever a possibility Charis could save Maggie from the pool? No. But that thought never crossed her mind. She just knew her sister needed her, and she went in after her.

I cannot tell you how proud I was when I pulled my two girls out of the water and Charis, sputtering on the deck of the pool, was completely unflustered. She was unafraid! As if she knew the whole time this was the only possible outcome. *Of course Daddy would jump in and pull us out! Daddy can do anything! We are his little girls!*

Charis may not have known much, but she knew this: When the waters are so deep and you're drowning, your Father can still touch bottom. He is there. He cares. And He can do anything. If you can believe that much, you will see miracles. In fact, in Mark 9:23 Jesus says, "If you can believe, all things *are* possible to him who believes."

You may be facing a "drowning" situation as we speak. You or someone your heart adores might be caught in the undertow, life's waves breaking over you, and you are going down. It's not your job to do the impossible. Your job is to jump in, get your "impossibility" in one hand, and reach for your Father with the other. That is really all intercession is. Taking the impossible to God who does the impossible before breakfast.

PRAYER

Father, God, show me today if there is an impossibility You would like me to take hold of in prayer. I believe nothing is impossible for You. I believe You are here and You care. Would You jump into this situation? Take it into Your strong hands, with Your unfailing love, and do what only You can do. In Jesus' name, Amen.

WHAT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT SAYING TO YOU?

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FOR FURTHER STUDY

Psalm 42; Psalm 116; Matthew 8; Matthew 9:28

CREATED TO BE | BELIEVE IN JESUS

Day **Seven**

Day 07

ONE-EIGHTY

by Kyle Fox

“And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart.” *Ezekiel 36:26 (NLT)*



“Welcome home!” *Huh? What did she say?* I didn’t know how to respond to the sweet lady who greeted me the first time I walked into Gateway Church over a decade ago. I’m pretty sure I awkwardly mumbled, “You too?” as she handed me the bulletin. I wondered if she said this to everyone or if she knew insecurity and social anxiety had a paralyzing grip on my life. In hindsight, I know the Holy Spirit prompted her to say those words the evening God gave 19-year-old me (the most insecure person

ever) the courage to attend a Saturday night service by myself. That’s when everything changed; I left with a new heart and a place to belong.

Weeks before, a doctor told me my battle with social anxiety would hinder my ability to thrive in social settings and make engaging in conversations a struggle for the rest of my life. If he could only see me now! This part of my story is why Ezekiel 36 is one of my favorite chapters in the Bible. Ezekiel, an Old Testament prophet whose name means “God will

strengthen,” paints a vivid picture of God’s salvation and restoration. After Ezekiel tells the people of Israel God will give them a new heart and put His Spirit in them, we see an illustration of what this looks like in the life of a believer.

“And when I bring you back, people will say, ‘This former *wasteland* is now like the *Garden of Eden*! The abandoned and ruined cities now have strong walls and are filled with people!’” (Ezekiel 36:35, NLT) The word for wasteland here means deserted, to have no sign of life. Compare that to the garden described in Genesis when God walked with Adam and Eve. In Hebrew, Eden means luxury and delight. This is more than a slight change; it’s a complete one-eighty.

A few years ago at Starbucks, I ran into an old classmate from high school. He didn’t believe me when I told him what I do for a living. “A pastor?!” It’s because he remembered the old me: a relational wasteland, terribly insecure, and emotionally crippled by social anxiety. Thankfully, that’s not me anymore. Quite the opposite! The devil’s plan was for my weakness to stifle my potential. For too long I settled on surviving, but all along, God’s desire was to completely transform weakness into strength.

Does something in your life resemble a wasteland? For the past week, we’ve been focusing on believing in Jesus. Part of believing in Jesus is believing you are who He says you are and trusting His ability to transform every area of your life. Your weakness does not define you. The more barren the wasteland appears, the more bountiful the harvest when we walk in our God-given identity. His strength is made perfect in our weakness, and He wants to reveal His strength and restorative power to you today.

PRAYER

God, thank You for the gift of a new heart. Please show me if there is an area in my life You want to transform. I believe in Your ability to make all things new, and I choose You as my source of identity today. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

***BELONG
TO
FAMILY***

Belonging to family means developing meaningful friendships with others who love Jesus and walking through life together by loving, helping, and protecting each other.

CREATED TO BE | BELONG TO FAMILY

Day ***Eight***

Day 08

ORPHANS NO MORE

by Zach Neese

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! *1 John 3:1 (NIV)*



I remember the first time I saw Abigail. She was hiding behind a The Children’s Garden employee—no bigger than a sip of water, hair cropped short, in a little pink dress. Eyes wide with apprehension, she scanned the group of happy-crying Americans. Who would be her new mother and father?

For reasons I can only imagine, Abigail’s birth family had abandoned her at a bus station in Wuhan, China, but that would never happen again. Her new father would never leave her and never forsake her. He had *chosen* her as his own and would

never “unchoose” her. She had a family now—a mother and father who would love her and sacrifice for her, a sister to share her life with, and three big brothers who would smash anyone who ever tried to bother her.

I can’t imagine my family without Abigail. She is not my Chinese sister. She is not my adopted sister. She is just *my sister*, and I love her.

There is something gargantuan about the heart of our Father God. His heart is so big, the Bible says He *is* love (1 John 4:8). Imagine a father who has so much love

to express that He just keeps expanding his family—He can't stop bringing orphans home, and He can't stop *loving* them. That is God. And this big-hearted God has set His affections on *you* (1 John 3:1).

In order to adopt you, He had to make great sacrifices. In fact, His Son would have to go through hell to bring you home (Romans 5:8). Can you imagine anyone loving you that much? Well, *your* Father does. When He adopted you it was with an irrevocable promise and sealed with an unbreakable bond, the blood of His Son. You were not just adopted out of the hell you knew, you were adopted into a household—a *family*. That means the house of God is *your* house. You belong there. It means the people of God are your family (Mark 3:33–34)—your brothers and sisters—bound by something even stronger than the blood of your ancestors, the blood of your Savior.

Next time you walk into church, look around. The people you see are not just a congregation, they are your family. A family who loves one another, helps one another, and protects one another. A family who plays together and prays together because family belongs together—bound by something stronger than common interest; bound by blood.



PRAYER

Father in Heaven, thank You for loving me, choosing me, and calling me Your child. Please help me to see people through Your eyes. Help me to love my brothers and sisters with Your heart, and bind us together in unity. In Jesus' name, Amen.

WHAT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT SAYING TO ME?

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FOR FURTHER STUDY

Mark 3:33–34; Colossians 3:15; Hebrews 13:5; 1 Peter 2:5; 1 John 4:9

CREATED TO BE | BELONG TO FAMILY

Day **Nine**

Day 09

FINDING IDENTITY AND PURPOSE

by Tom Lane

Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation. God settles the solitary in a home. *Psalm 68:5–6 (ESV)*



Several years ago, I sat with a young woman who was waiting on her fiancé to join her for their premarriage counseling appointment with me. Upon his arrival, the young man apologized for being late and commented how this day marked his one-year anniversary with his employer and how it was the longest he had ever been with one company. When I asked him why he hadn't worked for anyone longer than a year, he shrugged his shoulders and said, "I don't know." However, the answer became clear as we began to process his past,

and he talked about an incident with his father that had a major impact on how he views himself.

One night when he was younger, he went into the garage to spend time with his dad who was working on a car. From under the car, his dad asked him to get a tool. He wasn't familiar with what his dad was asking for, so he guessed. His dad took one look at the wrong tool, threw it, and angrily told his son if that was all he knew about tools, he didn't belong in a garage—he belonged in the kitchen with his mom! He didn't receive any training

from his father, and he definitely wasn't nurtured or encouraged. Instead, his father just heaped disappointment and failure on him. It was obvious this experience left him confused and insecure in his ability to succeed in risky and unfamiliar situations.

Just like this young man, we're all born into a family; yet, not all families are the same at developing and caring for their family members. Family is meant to provide a firm foundation for life, nurturing and training us to fulfill our purposes. Without this foundation, how can we expect to know who we are or what we were created to do?

The good news is when we come into relationship with Jesus Christ, we are adopted into the family of God. As our Father, God is committed to training and nurturing us while He shows us His purpose for us. Our relationship with Christ introduces us to a new identity—*our true identity*. We don't have to worry about being ridiculed or rejected, because God accepts all who come to Him.

Through our relationship with Jesus Christ, we have roots, history, and a whole new sense of belonging as sons and daughters of God. Do you feel alone and lost without identity or purpose? Step into all Jesus Christ has for you and become part of God's family. You will come to understand you are a son or daughter of God and will find purpose in representing Him and advancing His kingdom.

PRAYER

Thank You Father for adopting me into Your family. Thank You for giving me identity and purpose. I receive Your name today as I walk in Your plan for my life! In Jesus' name, Amen.

WHAT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT SAYING TO ME?

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FOR FURTHER STUDY

Romans 8:15; Ephesians 1:5; 1 Corinthians 12:12–13

CREATED TO BE | BELONG TO FAMILY

Day Ten

Day 10

DO I MATTER?

by Mallory Bassham

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you. Romans 15:7 (NIV)



Have you ever felt rejected? You're definitely not alone. In the book of Genesis, we read about Joseph and how he was rejected by people throughout his life. As a young man, his brothers threw him into a pit and sold him as a slave, and then when he was older, he was framed for a crime against his boss's wife. Yet even after he was betrayed by his own flesh and blood, sold as a slave, and experienced unfair suffering and anguish, he still maintained his integrity and faith. To top it off, he not only reconciled with his brothers, he blessed them abundantly! It's only because of

Joseph's great faith that he could continue to love God and not become bitter and full of self-pity.

Most of us haven't experienced *that* level of rejection in our lives, yet we've all dealt with it. While rejection strips us of joy, it does something else as well. It gives us the opportunity to reach down into the depths of our souls and decide to believe God loves us.

Throughout the New Testament we see examples of acceptance. Jesus washed feet (John 13), touched lepers (Matthew 8:3), ate with sinners (Mark 2:15–17), and displayed unlimited patience for the unlovable

(Hebrews 12:3). Paul, who murdered those who followed the teachings of Jesus right up until he had an encounter with God, went on to tell the church in Romans 15:7 to “accept one another just as Christ has accepted you.”

Just like Paul, we were once lost but now we’re saved. When we invited Jesus into our lives, He accepted us as sons and daughters in His family, and no one can change that. We have the gift of fellowship and friendship with others who love the Lord.

God knew we would deal with rejection, so He gave us a verse to remind us He will never leave us: “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38–39).

We may occasionally flounder when we feel rejected, but being anchored in the love of Jesus is our greatest calling. Trusting God to guard your heart is the best security possible. He loves you no matter what, because you are forever and always family.



PRAYER

Thank You Lord for always accepting me and extending grace toward me. Help me to bring my struggles and disappointments to You that I might have the mind of Christ. Thank You for the provision for me to be part of Your family. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

CREATED TO BE | BELONG TO FAMILY

Day **Eleven**

Day 11

FINDING FELLOWSHIP

by Robb Brewer

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. *Hebrews 10:24–25*



In 2008, I had a fever. I thought it was like any other fever until a week went by and not only had it not improved, it got much worse. My wife took me to the emergency room, and soon I was on a CareFlite helicopter heading to a cardiac care unit. Doctors quickly discovered I had a virus that had worked its way through my body and attacked my heart. The only way I would survive was with a heart transplant.

As I labored for every breath in the intensive care unit (ICU) of Medical City Hospital, two miracles happened. The first miracle was that God healed me right there in the ICU. The second miracle took place down the hall.

My wife, Jill, was sitting in the waiting room in a state of shock at just how suddenly my health had declined. Here she was a mom who, in a matter of moments, stood a good chance of having to raise our four young kids on her own. But in that

moment of fear, everything changed. One by one, all of our Gateway Worship friends and others from Gateway came and joined her in the waiting room. They stayed with her, prayed for her, loved her, and ministered to her—they were family to her. And it didn't end there. They were her support system in the difficult months that followed as I recovered, and they got her through one of the toughest times of her life.

What happened with my wife is what the writer of Hebrews is talking about when he says, “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works.” (Hebrews 10:24–25). However, the key part of the verse comes next: “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.” If we weren't involved in our church and plugged into a group (in our case, Gateway Worship), how would they have known what was happening to us? Where would our support come from?

It's not about just showing up, sitting in a pew (or a comfy theater-style seat), getting your weekly dose of God, and then leaving. It's about relationships and community. You see, it's the desire of all people to belong to family. No one wants to be alone. It's amazing what we'll do to be a part of a family. We'll adopt their culture and change our behavior because we love them so much and want to be with them.

Part of our culture at Gateway is to come together as family. It's part of who we are, and it makes us better. Proverbs 27:17 says, “As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.” If you're struggling to find your place in the family, I want to encourage you to reach out to someone today. It could be as simple as sending a text message to someone, making plans to attend an Equip class, or joining a Gateway Group. There are wonderful people all around you ready to welcome you into the family.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, show me how to live in connected relationship with others in the church. Let me extend grace and love to my church family, just as You extended grace and love to me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

CREATED TO BE | BELONG TO FAMILY

Day **Twelve**

Day 12

BETTER TOGETHER

by Chelsea Seaton

A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken. Ecclesiastes 4:12 (NLT)



Being open and vulnerable is not easy for me. When asked how I'm doing, it's more natural for me to respond with, "I'm great, blessed, and wonderful!" rather than the truth, even if I'm having a rough time. I think most people would say this is true for them as well. We would rather do anything else than be honest and say we don't have everything under control. Admitting our weaknesses and asking for help is not easy.

If we look deeper, what keeps us from asking for help is actually good,

old-fashioned pride. Our culture glorifies *independence*, but God created us to be *dependent* on Him and others too. Asking for help isn't just biblical, it's beneficial! In Ecclesiastes 4, Solomon tells the story of a man who toiled under the sun and was depressed because all his work was meaningless. He goes on to explain that when you have a friend by your side, everything changes: "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who

is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up” (Ecclesiastes 4:9–10). God’s Word makes it clear that finding friends and being honest about your struggles sets you up for greater success than you would have alone.

I saw this play out in my own life when I trained for my second marathon. I trained alone for my first one, and it took me five and a half grueling, horrible hours to finish. For my second marathon, I trained with a group of friends and finished one whole hour faster! In our group, we encouraged each other to do things we couldn’t do alone, and all of us achieved greater things because we worked together.

You can go to church every weekend and not let anyone know you. You can fake your answers when people ask how you’re doing and not have anyone to help you when you fall. Or you can admit that you need help. You can get in a Gateway Group and overcome things you thought would never go away. Let people know you, because when you do, you will gain so much more than you realize.



PRAYER

Lord, thank You that we don’t have to walk alone. I lay down my pride today and ask that You would help me get connected with other believers who I can be honest with and receive encouragement from. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

CREATED TO BE | BELONG TO FAMILY

Day ***Thirteen***

Day 13

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

by Amanda Johnson

“By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:35



Loving people sounds easy, but have you noticed how difficult it can be to *really* love people—especially when they’ve done something to upset you? How easy is it to love someone who just cut you off in traffic? Or someone who betrayed your trust? It’s extremely difficult in both circumstances. But if we look at the story of the Last Supper in the upper room where Jesus and the disciples were gathered, Jesus gave us the perfect example of how we can love others, and He did it knowing

Judas had betrayed Him, a betrayal that would ultimately lead to his crucifixion.

Moments after Judas left, Jesus spoke these words to the remaining disciples: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34–35). Jesus, who was only hours away from being crucified, was giving the disciples a new way to live. However, His statement leads to another question: How do we truly love one another?

If we look closely, just a few verses earlier, we see Jesus already demonstrated this that night when He washed His disciples' feet and said, "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet." Loving others is serving others in relationship. When we belong to family we have to love, serve, and grow in relationship with each other.

An example of loving relationships comes from Romans 12:15: "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep." Sometimes we don't feel like rejoicing with others. In fact, sometimes it's easier to be jealous, but love isn't selfish or envious. Loving one another means being kind, patient, and hopeful. Loving one another is an act of generosity—generosity of joy and sharing in celebrations. Isn't good news always better when shared with someone who has been praying and believing *with* you? God made us with a need to connect with people and share the joys and experiences of life with others. When we belong to family, we develop lasting relationships that demonstrate the very heart of God here on earth.

Are you currently growing in relationship with others? Take Jesus' words and actions to heart and look for ways to serve each other. You'll be amazed at the friendships you'll make, and the world will be amazed at the demonstration of love for others.

PRAYER

God, I want to truly understand what it means to love people. Help me to demonstrate Your love in the way I treat others. Give me the eyes to see others the way You see them, and give me the courage and wisdom to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. Show me ways I can build and grow relationships with others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

CREATED TO BE | BELONG TO FAMILY

Day **Fourteen**

Day 14

THE NAPKIN

by Jelani Lewis

God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen. 1 Peter 4:10–11 (NLT)



I didn't receive an allowance growing up. (Full disclosure: there was one summer my dad paid me three dollars to mow the front yard, but since I couldn't purchase an eight-count nugget meal from Chick-fil-A with it, in my humble but right opinion, it doesn't count.) And while I don't think there is anything inherently wrong with giving your children an allotted amount of money

for doing chores around the home, it was not part of the Lewis family value system. I can only conclude that my parents felt my siblings and I should wash the dishes and keep our rooms clean—not because of payment, but because we were part of the family. Though I would not have been able to articulate it this way, I inherently understood members of the Lewis family not only consumed but also contributed.

The Bible tells us that as believers, we're part of the body of Christ and the family of God. In 1 Peter, the apostle begins this letter declaring his audience to be the elect, the chosen, or, very simply, the family of God. In chapter four, today's verse, he challenges them: "God has given each of you a gift from His great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another." The idea here is clear. We have all been graciously gifted by God, and we are called to use our gifts not for ourselves but to serve others. In doing so, we bring glory to God.

I believe our gifts are like napkins. A napkin can be placed in two areas: the collar of your shirt, which proclaims, "Feed and serve me," or on your arm, which declares, "I am here to serve you." Likewise, depending on the posture of our hearts, our gifts are either a tool for selfishness or a tool to serve others.

When we belong to the family of God, it means we are always invited to the Father's table to eat and consume; however, because we are members of His Body, we should be equally motivated to serve and contribute. The concluding question we should pause and ponder is *where will I place my napkin today?*



PRAYER

Father, I thank You that I am not an orphan but I am Your son or daughter, and I belong to the body of Christ and the family of God. I thank You for the gifts You have given me, and I ask You to reveal how You have gifted me and how You want me to use each gift to serve others and bring you glory. In Jesus' name, Amen.

**BECOME
A
FOLLOWER**

Becoming a follower means shifting the focus of your life from self-centered to Christ-centered by doing what Jesus would do and loving as He would love.

CREATED TO BE | **BECOME A FOLLOWER**

Day **Fifteen**

Day 15

THE WILL

by Robb Brewer

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.

Romans 8:14 (NIV)



When I was 14 years old, my dad started teaching me how to drive a vehicle with a standard transmission, and the first lesson was to back the car out of the garage. He sat me in the driver's seat while he lectured from the passenger side about the gear shift under my right hand and the myriad of peddles at my feet. Honestly, I didn't hear a word he was saying because I was so excited about driving—even if it was in reverse. And really, what was he going to teach me anyway, right? After all, I'd been observing drivers for 14 years.

So when it came time to release the pedal under my left foot, I didn't hear him say the word, "slowly." With the car in reverse, I took my foot off the clutch suddenly. The car jolted backward and died. My first thought was, *I broke the car.* My second thought was, *I smashed the garage door.* My third thought was, *my dad is going to kill me in the garage.*

I glanced over at my dad. He was staring straight ahead, jaw clinched. I managed to let the word "sorry" dribble out of my mouth. Without so much as a look in my direction, he said, "Now, are you ready to listen to me?"

And with that, I gave my will over to my father.

This really is the picture of salvation. Our Heavenly Father doesn't sit in the driver's seat. He doesn't control us. He offers navigation from the passenger side. It's up to us to steer, press the accelerator, and apply the brake appropriately, but we have a choice. Will we decide where we go or will we go where He prompts us?

A submitted will brakes when God says slow down, accelerates when He says to press forward, and goes to the right and the left when the Father offers directions. At any time, we have the choice to say, "No, I don't want to go that direction," or "This is too slow, I'm speeding up." But then we're no longer submitted, and discipleship apart from submission is impossible. This is made clear to us in Isaiah 55:8, which says, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord." Try as we might to make our own way in life, God's way is always better.

I eventually got out of the garage. But I only learned to do so when I started listening to my dad. Before long, he directed me to start moving forward. He taught me to become an accomplished driver, and that growth has enabled me to drive along some of the most majestic and beautiful places on this continent; and it all began in a little garage with a submitted will.

Are you fully submitted to God's will in your life? Is there an area that you need to give over to Him?

PRAYER

Father, in this moment, I submit my will to You. I don't want to do anything without Your direction. I want to grow as one of Your followers, so I now prioritize Your voice over my own. Grant me strength to live in obedience and submission all the days of my life. In Jesus' name, Amen.

CREATED TO BE | **BECOME A FOLLOWER**

Day **Sixteen**

Day 16

FORMED IN US

by Marcus Brecheen

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” Galatians 3:20



When I was a kid, my parents decided to convert our garage into a room in our house. It was a great idea. Our family had grown and we needed the extra space, so they hired a man from church who was good at construction. Every day after school I would go into the garage to see how much progress had been made. The contractors created this new space with all sorts of materials: wood and sheetrock, paint and insulation, carpet and windows,

and wiring. To this day, this extra room is still a vital part of my parents' home.

The work Jesus does in people's lives is much the same. Most days I don't notice the progress at all. Other days, His work seems amazingly profound. He does things I would have never thought about. Sometimes I'm surprised at how many things need work! My theology has weak spots, and my selfishness shows at strange moments. My prayer life is awkward, and some days I can't tell the difference between temptation and sin, and I feel horrible either way.

I'm grateful that as a young believer, I discovered some very strange, yet interesting language when I read Galatians 4:19. It says, "My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you." God promised to *form* Christ in me. The key here is that God is the one doing the forming, not us.

So what does it mean for God to *form* Christ in us? It's a progressive change over a lifetime, which is called sanctification. When we are first saved, our spirits are justified and immediately put in right standing with God because of Jesus' sacrifice, but our souls—mind, will, and emotions—must be sanctified, as it says in Ephesians 5:26, "with the washing of water by the word." It's clear, based on this Scripture, that we have a role to play too. The more we devote ourselves to God through worship, prayer, and reading and memorizing Scripture, the more our love for Him will grow. Jesus being formed in us is a work done by God when we devote ourselves to Him and follow in Jesus' footsteps.

The glory of the gospel is that Jesus is not only the way of salvation but also the sustainer and grower of our life in God. Christ is *formed* in people. He lives today on the earth, through you and me. That is the gospel. Are you being washed by the Word? You'll be amazed how life-changing it is to devote yourself to reading God's Word and following in Jesus' footsteps.

PRAYER

Father God, Your faithfulness is so unyielding, yet we can live so many days thinking You're not there at all. Sometimes we are audacious enough to think we need a better deal from You. On our best days, we know You permeate every place we call our own. And Your mercy is new every morning. We welcome You into every part of our lives and say, in Your mercy, form Christ in me. Do whatever is necessary to finish this process, to Your own glory. In Jesus' name, Amen.

CREATED TO BE | **BECOME A FOLLOWER**

Day **Seventeen**

Day 17

FILTER AND SUBSTANCE

by Mark Harris

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:1–2 (ESV)



When we moved to Texas several years ago, we were warmly welcomed by our new Gateway family. I can also say we were just as *warmly* welcomed by the Texas summer sun. As we looked for our new homestead, I was hesitant to buy a house with a swimming pool. Being a previous pool owner, I was fully aware of the responsibility of maintaining a swimming pool; however, the Texas heat made us do it! We ended up becoming

proud owners of a small, sometimes clean, sometimes efficient, swimming pool.

Through trial and error, I have definitely learned a pool requires daily attention. A body of water that's not constantly moving will have a gradual build-up of algae and bacteria. A swimming pool needs to cycle all of its water through a clean filter, with the right combination of substances, several times daily. If neglected, a body

of water will turn swamp-green with algae, and it takes a while to get it back to clean, pure, refreshing, swimmable water.

Our lives are very similar to the body of water we call a swimming pool. They need daily attention, daily filtering, and daily infusions of the right substances. When we fail to get our daily infusion of time with God, we can become polluted by the stuff of this world. However, when we turn our attention to God in prayer and worship, leaving behind the cares of this world, our thinking, hearing, and vision become more clear. His presence—His clean filter—purifies us.

In the same way, when we spend time in God's Word, all the things that pollute and destroy us fall away. Our lives become clean and pure before God. In fact, Ephesians 5:26 says that we can be cleaned "with the washing of water by the word." His Word removes the algae and bacteria of life, then fills us with His wisdom.

Without the substance of God's Word and filter of His presence, we end up being shaped by and conformed to this world. The good news is, His mercy and love invite us in. We can bring all of our filth, pollution, and sin to His filter, and He will clean us and make us pure and beautiful. When we are willing to offer ourselves as living sacrifices, He promises to transform us, renew us, and fill us with the substance of His Word.

PRAYER

Dear heavenly Father, I lay my life before You today as a living sacrifice. I surrender everything to You. Purify me and cleanse me. Fill me with Your wisdom. Help me to hear Your voice and follow Your path. Amen.

CREATED TO BE | **BECOME A FOLLOWER**

Day ***Eighteen***

Day 18

HEAR, BELIEVE, OBEY

by Steve Dulin

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Hebrews 11:6



One of my favorite passages of Scripture is Hebrews 11 because it tells us about the “heroes of faith”—the people throughout the Bible who did amazing exploits for God. I have read Hebrews 11 many times, but one day I noticed a pattern. All the heroes listed in that chapter *heard* God, *believed* God, and *obeyed* God. Noah heard God tell him to build an ark, he believed God, obeyed Him, and saved his household. Moses followed the same pattern when God told him to take the

children of Israel out of Egypt. And when Joshua heard, believed, and obeyed God’s instruction to march around Jericho seven times and shout, the walls came tumbling down.

Many people who grew up in church remember being told to hear and obey. But they are leaving a step out. We may hear God, but if we don’t *believe* what we’ve heard, we won’t obey. Biblical faith is believing what God says no matter what people, our feelings, or our circumstances tell us.

The good news is we can follow the pattern outlined in Hebrews 11 today! We can hear God every day because He has sent the Holy Spirit to speak to us, guide us into all truth (John 16:13), and tell us what God wants us to do. And there is more good news! If we hear and believe Him, He gives us the power to obey Him—to do what He told us to do—even if it seems impossible.

Acts 1:8 says, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” The Holy Spirit gives us power not only to *witness* to other people about Jesus but also to do what He says. When we obey God and He shows up to do signs, wonders, and miracles through our lives, it makes us want to follow Jesus even more and become even greater disciples.

I don’t know about you, but I would have wanted to be one of those heroes of faith. What if God was writing a faith chapter today in the books He keeps in heaven? Would you make it in? What do you think it would take to become a hero of faith? Follow the examples of Jesus’ disciples and the heroes of faith, and hear, believe, and obey God every day. When you become a follower, you have the power to change the world for Jesus Christ!



PRAYER

Father, thank You for sending the Holy Spirit so He might guide me into all truth. Today, I choose to hear what You are saying, believe You, and obey You so I might be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ and become one of His followers. Please give me the grace and power to do Your will. In Jesus' name, Amen.

CREATED TO BE | **BECOME A FOLLOWER**

Day ***Nineteen***

Day 19

DIVINE INTERSECTIONS

by Tim Sheppard

Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and He will establish your plans.

Proverbs 16:3 (NIV)



Recently, my family and I drove up the California coastline to enjoy the scenery, and we decided to pull off the road at a vista point. This one spot among hundreds was only a small, widened dirt shoulder where just a few cars could fit. As we relished the ocean view, a couple walked up to us and asked, “Do you go to Gateway?” Of all the places in the world and of all the moments in the day, we’d parked right beside a family who attends the same campus as us!

Coincidence? Not a chance! We had committed the day to God, and in response,

He graciously established our plans. Though we thought we pulled off the road to view the ocean, He orchestrated a divine intersection!

Not every divine intersection seems so obvious. God often disguises the extraordinary in the ordinary. If we’re not watchful, we’ll become numb to the glorious subplots He writes into everyday life. It’s always good to ask, “Am I really going to the grocery store to get the milk?” In other words, be aware the Holy Spirit could be wrapping a deeper purpose around a simple, sometimes mundane task.

God extends the invitation of a lifetime to each one of us to become a follower of Jesus. Regardless of our vocation, we can join with Him to fulfill His work (Matthew 6:10). As we observe what God is doing around us, His grace—the supernatural power the Holy Spirit gives us to live as overcomers—is available to exchange our everyday routines for kingdom-purpose living.

Jesus only did what He saw the Father doing (John 5:19). As He “went around doing good” (Acts 10:38, NLT), conversations turned to callings, dinners to deliverances, and marriage celebrations to miracles. Jesus made the most of every moment, moving from one divine intersection to the next in complete surrender to God.

This is normal Christianity. God’s Spirit empowers us to do the works that Jesus did (and even greater works) as we walk in yielded communion. The commonplace becomes an adventure when we cooperate with God and become His followers.

As you go about each day, prayerfully plan your schedule and commit whatever you do to God. Talk with Him about everything. Constantly ask God to let you see with His eyes, hear with His ears, and respond with His grace and truth. Divine intersections will become the “new normal” as you sync up with His moment-by-moment plan for your life.

PRAYER

Lord, I want to join with You to do Your will. I need Your grace to live as a true follower. I surrender everything. Open my eyes to see the divine intersections You orchestrate and empower me to respond with grace and truth. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

CREATED TO BE | **BECOME A FOLLOWER**

Day **Twenty**

Day 20

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

by Josh Morris

Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle. 2 Thessalonians 2:15



Imagine for a moment I invited you into my home for a time of fellowship so we could grow in our friendship with one another. You accept this invitation, knock on my door, and come in expecting good conversation and possibly a time to gather around my table and enjoy a meal together. How would you feel if once you were inside, I invited you yet again to come into my home? What if I wondered out loud whether you were really there or not? All the while, you are standing right there with me and responding with reassuring

proclamations of your presence. How many times would it take for me to ask you to come into my home when *you're already in my home* before you'd think I'd lost my mind?

Does this story sound familiar? Unfortunately, this absurd scenario bears far too much resemblance to my relationship with Christ when I was a young believer. For many years after I invited Jesus to be my Lord and Savior and to live in me, I wondered if He really responded to my invitation. Was He really there? Of course, He was! In Revelation 3:20, we

read, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.”

He stands in the home of our hearts crying out for us to invite Him in so He can enter into relationship with us. Yet we often doubt His presence, so we continue to invite Him in even though He is already with us. It’s a cycle that repeats itself over and over.

So how do we stop this pattern? We trust and believe what He said in His Word is true. We do this by applying ourselves to the spiritual disciplines of reading our Bibles, praying, and fasting. Not only is it important we commit to these disciplines, it’s important we stay focused on their purpose. They aren’t pointless traditions. They are at the heart of our relationship with Jesus and help us realize when we invite Him into our lives, He truly is with us. Not just for a time but forever.

Allow yourself to move past any doubt of His presence in your life, and instead, approach reading the Word, praying, and fasting with excitement as you are transformed into His disciple. Enter into moments of prayer basking in the light of true communion and conversation. Enter into fasting with the understanding that He denied His flesh while on earth and suffers with us in all the trials that beguile us. Let’s commit to stop doubting His presence in our lives and instead start building a loving relationship with the One who lives in us.

PRAYER

Dear heavenly Father, Thank You for coming into my home and never leaving. I want to live in Your presence and build a lasting relationship with You. Draw me to You and help me to see the spiritual disciplines as a way of growing closer to You. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

CREATED TO BE | **BECOME A FOLLOWER**

Day
Twenty-
One

Day 21

LAY DOWN YOUR LIFE

by Chad Sykes

“This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.” John 15:12–13

R

Recently when someone asked me what I like to do for fun, I responded with, “I read books.”

I have to admit, sometimes this makes me feel really boring. I wish I had a cool hobby like mountain climbing or rebuilding old motorcycles. The truth is I’m a reader.

In searching for a book recently, I noticed something interesting. The self-help genre has skyrocketed in popularity! You’ve probably seen these books online or on the shelves at a bookstore. A deluge of books aimed at you becoming the most

efficient you, the put-together you, the superhero you. In fact, in 2014, self-help was the world’s bestselling genre.

The explosive popularity of these books says something about the deepest desire of every human being. We all have an internal drive to be transformed into something beyond what we are now. We all want to *become someone*. But, what does this journey of *becoming someone* look like? The story illustrated in most self-help books tells us to relentlessly work on ourselves. We’re offered countless theories,

strategies, and applications to get us there. The conclusion is if we heavily invest in *ourselves*, then we'll reach our full potential.

As Christians, however, we have quite another paradigm. To be a follower of Jesus does not mean a constant turning inward to live our best life, but a constant turning *outward* toward God and others in service, sacrifice, and love. The deep kingdom truth revealed in the life of Jesus is this: only when we forget about ourselves and serve, care for, and love others, will we ultimately become all He made us to be. In fact, look at what Jesus says in Matthew 10:39: "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it." Focusing on our own self-development to the exclusion of serving others only results in a distortion of God's vision for our lives. Jesus is our example, and we are called to follow in His footsteps by doing what He would do and loving as He loves.

What does this look like in your life today? Are there areas you need to lay down in order to follow Jesus? As we lay down our desires daily and live for the sake of loving and serving others, we'll find that by God's grace we've become God's full vision of who He created us to be. Then, and only then, will we become who we've always wanted to be.



PRAYER

Father, thank You for sending Your Son into the world to show me how to live in Your kingdom. Show me what You want me to lay down in order to follow You. And just as Jesus freely loved and served people, not even preserving His own life, enable me to do the same. I choose to die to self so I can live for Christ. In Jesus' name, Amen.

***BUILD
GOD'S
KINGDOM***

Building God's kingdom means submitting to God and being His hands and feet to those around us by giving of ourselves and serving others.

CREATED TO BE | BUILD GOD'S KINGDOM

Day
Twenty-
Two

Day 22

PARTNERING WITH GOD

by Amanda Johnson

“And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” *Matthew 16:19*



Has a small child ever helped you make cookies? If so, you know how much extra time, patience, and clean-up it takes. Sure, it would be easier (and faster!) for you to make the cookies without their “help,” but the look in the child’s eyes when they get to enjoy eating the finished product of their work makes it all worth it.

In the same way, have you ever wondered why God needs you to help build His kingdom? If He is really the all-powerful, all-knowing God, couldn’t He do this without

your help? Wouldn’t it be easier for Him to do it Himself?

The reason God needs us is because He has *decided* to need us to build His kingdom.

And, the crazy part about it is He doesn’t *need* anything. Acts 17:25 says, “Nor is He worshipped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things.” He is self-existent, self-sufficient, and self-sustaining. Yet, God decided to need you.

God doesn’t need us to exist, yet He decided to need us to co-exist. He chose

to partner with us on the earth. The first example of this takes place in Genesis 2, when God let Adam name the animals. Genesis 2:19 says “And whatever Adam called each living creature that was its name.” He decided to partner with Adam by letting him choose the names rhinoceros, llama, and turkey!

In Mark chapter six, it says, “Jesus could not do a mighty work there because of their unbelief.” Now that’s an amazing verse! It doesn’t say Jesus *would not*, it says He *could not* because they didn’t believe. Is it possible God has limited His unlimited power on this earth to our faith—*our partnership*?

Mark 16:18 says, “They will lay hands on the sick and they will recover.” It doesn’t say, they will recover and they will lay hands on them. They will recover is God’s part, but it doesn’t happen until we do our part. He chooses to use our prayers to heal and build His kingdom. Jesus also said, “Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven. Whatever you loose will be loosed” (Matthew 16:19). His kingdom is built and expanded through our hands and our prayers!

God has a great plan to redeem the brokenness in the world and build His kingdom here on earth, but it requires a partnership with us, His Church. What is your God-given role in His kingdom? Have you decided to partner with Him?

PRAYER

Lord, thank You for choosing to partner with me on the earth. Please help me see how I can build Your kingdom. I humbly offer all I have to Your work on the earth. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

CREATED TO BE | BUILD GOD'S KINGDOM

Day
Twenty-
Three

Day 23

THE KINGDOM

by Josh Morris

Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.” Luke 17:20–21



We as Christians often find ourselves dreaming of another world—a far off place with greener grass and a promise there will be no pain and no suffering. A place that’s even more appealing to us considering the circumstances of our world today. The place I’m talking about is the kingdom of heaven and as our focus on it grows, our broken place looks just a bit more broken than usual. If we’re not careful, our love for the kingdom of heaven breeds disgust

for the kingdom of earth. Yet who are we to despise God’s creation?

What would it be like if the second coming happened today and Jesus showed up and said, “Who wants to get out of this rotten, stinking world?” We would all gladly raise our hands. What if once you got to heaven, you overheard Jesus say to God, “I went down there and gathered everyone who wanted to leave the earth and brought them here to heaven, *now* we can go back to earth and be with *our*

people.” Of course this isn’t a true story, but we need to remember that Jesus came to earth for the *unbelievers*. He didn’t come to condemn His creation but instead to *heal* His creation.

Because of this, we need to reevaluate our thoughts and beliefs regarding the kingdom of heaven. Jesus’ life and death here on the earth gave us access to the kingdom of heaven—we just need to turn away from the window pane to see it. And while heaven is a real place, and we as believers will be there with Him when our earthly death comes, His vision for us is not to be a people waiting on death but to bring life to the dead. We need to be His hands and feet—causing intersections of heaven and earth to occur. When we give to the poor and care for the widows, the light of heaven shines through.

Consider the rich young ruler who came to Jesus and asked how he could enter into the kingdom of heaven. Jesus answered by telling him to sell his possessions and give the money to the poor. If read through the wrong lens, it seems like Jesus is saying we must be poor to go to heaven and, even worse, that we can buy our place in heaven. Yet we need to understand that Jesus was telling him how he can experience the kingdom right here, right now.

Let’s not allow our longing for heaven to stop us from bringing heaven to as many people as possible in our time here on earth. Who around you needs the kingdom of heaven? How can you help bring it to them in their time of need?

PRAYER

Lord, thank You for the opportunity to build the kingdom here on earth. Help me not to lose sight of what You’ve called me to do. Help me to be Your hands and feet and to see people through Your eyes. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

CREATED TO BE | BUILD GOD'S KINGDOM

Day
Twenty-
Four

Day 24

WHITE ELEPHANT GIFT

by Tom Lane

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 4:10–11 (ESV)



Have you ever gone to a Christmas party where you were supposed to bring a white elephant gift? The goal is to give a wonky or silly gift—pink flamingo boxer shorts, fluorescent socks, exploding golf balls—to some unsuspecting soul in hopes of a good laugh. A white elephant gift is a second-rate gift. An outcast gift. A thrift store reject. Truth be told, white elephant gifts are usually junk.

My wife, Jan, and I have four children and fifteen grandchildren, and we would never give them a white elephant gift for Christmas. We only want to give them the very best. In the same way, God only wants to give us, His children, the very best. In fact, He gave us the most extravagant and precious gift He had—His son, Jesus Christ.

When it comes to building God's kingdom, I wonder how many of us approach

it like we're giving a white elephant gift instead of giving our very best gift to the One we dearly love?

God is a good Father and established the pattern for giving and building His kingdom when He gave His first and best. *Jesus was God's firstfruit gift.* Allow me to explain what I mean by the term "firstfruit." God has called us not only to give but to give the first of our increase, and He modeled it by giving us Jesus. Solomon wrote in Proverbs 3:9–10, "Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine." We have an amazing promise from God that when we bring Him the first of our increase, we will be blessed.

The first and best gift we can give to build the kingdom is in the form of our tithe. Of course, we don't just do it to get a blessing. We bring the first and the best to reflect our love for God and to build His kingdom.

What kind of gift are you bringing to the Lord? Is it your first and best gift or is it a white elephant gift? Make a commitment to express your love to God and build His kingdom by giving Him your very best every day.

PRAYER

Lord, thank You for giving us Your very best gift. Thank You for the righteousness, redemption, and relationship we have in You. Help us to give our first and best as a reflection of our love and our commitment to build Your kingdom.

CREATED TO BE | BUILD GOD'S KINGDOM

Day
Twenty-
Five

Day 25

ARROWS IN HIS KINGDOM

by Zach Neese

Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from him. Children born to a young man are like arrows in a warrior's hands. How joyful is the man whose quiver is full of them! He will not be put to shame when he confronts his accusers at the city gates. *Psalm 127:3–5 (NLT)*



“Do you know that you are a child of God? And children *always* have access to their Father. It is not a request; it is a *right*.”

I was leading morning chapel at Christ For The Nations and had just finished speaking these words when one of my squirrely little toddlers escaped from her mommy and ran up on the platform with me. Wrapping both arms around my leg, Charis stared back at the Bible students who were eagerly waiting to see how I

would handle this ironic disruption. Talk about putting your money where your mouth is! This is my daughter, and I had just finished saying, “Children always have access to their father.” It was her *right* to be with me, wasn't it? So I put my hand on her head, closed my eyes, and began singing. As we worshipped, Charis unwrapped herself from my leg and began dancing around the platform, twirling her frilly dress like a pint-sized praise ballerina. No self-consciousness. No fear. She simply

belonged there. In that moment the presence of God stooped low to dance with Charis. As He came closer, she got down on her chubby little knees and bowed her head to the ground in worship, her unruly curls forming a pink-bowed circle on the platform. God moved and the place fell apart. It seemed the entire student body was on the ground in tears. That morning Bible students from 50 nations learned more about God from a baby girl than they did from their professors.

We need to see our kids the way God sees them. Children are not just the future of God's kingdom; they *are* His kingdom (Matthew 19:14). Isaiah 11:6 says, "And a little child shall lead them." Ministry comes naturally to them!

Imagine a three-year-old walking up to total strangers in Southlake Town Square asking, "Do you know Jesus loves you?" Imagine four little girls in Easter dresses walking up and down the street inviting the neighbors to church. Imagine our sons and daughters laying hands on the sick, giving food to the homeless, and asking their Father for miracles. That *is* the kingdom.

Children pray with more faith, preach more simply, prophesy more fearlessly, and love more purely than we do. Each of your children is an arrow God has placed in your hand, trusting that you will fletch, sharpen, aim, and release each child into darkness-shattering greatness. Please take this seriously: no one can sharpen your arrows but you. You do not need to be a Bible scholar to read the Bible to your children, pray with them, or bless them before bed. You just need to *see* them as God *sees* them, ask Him how to lead them, and be there to obey.

Start today by asking the Lord for wisdom and guidance as you raise your children to be arrows in God's kingdom.

CREATED TO BE | BUILD GOD'S KINGDOM

Day
Twenty-
Six

Day 26

SPIRITUAL GRANDCHILDREN

by Robb Brewer

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.

2 Timothy 2:2 (NIV)



For most of her life, my grandmother lived in Blooming Grove, Texas, a town about a half hour outside of Corsicana. When I was a kid, at least once a month, we would make the drive from our home in Dallas/Fort Worth to visit her. The scenery on the ride there was plain and slow, and the same could be said of the town, as well as the sermons at the little Baptist church she attended. I would know because we went with her when we visited. But it didn't matter how dry those sermons were,

my grandmother's faith was deeply rooted in Jesus, and to this day, her influence continues to impact the generations that have come after her.

You see, the full measure of your effectiveness as a disciple is found in your spiritual great grandchildren. I believe in today's verse, 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul is alluding to this. In essence, he's saying, "Take what I've taught you and invest it in someone else, who will then go teach it to someone else." He's encouraging us

to not just take what God is saying to us and lock it up deep within our minds, never to escape, but to tell someone.

That's what makes discipling others so simple. In fact, many people become intimidated at the thought of teaching or discipling someone else. They'll say, "Well, I don't know enough," or, "I'm not much of a theologian." But the truth is, you don't need to be an expert to disciple someone. In fact, it's easy to build the kingdom through discipleship. You just need to do two things.

1. You need to listen.

At Gateway, we believe that God speaks to us, whether it be through His voice or through His Word. Every time Pastor Robert preaches, he ends his message the same way. He asks, "What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?" What if every time he asked this question, you took a moment to really listen to the Holy Spirit?

2. You need to tell someone.

When God speaks to you, tell someone about it! You don't need to have them memorize a verse or recite a prayer. You simply have to tell them what God is saying. Even if it doesn't seem like a life-changing word, it can plant a spiritual seed that will grow and eventually bloom.

Discipleship is simple, and this is something my grandmother, and in turn my mother, understood. They gave me a perspective on reading God's Word that has deeply impacted my life, and I've been able to pass that on to my own children who are influencing the next generation.

God is calling us all to be disciples and to make disciples, and it's as simple as telling others what He's told you. You never know how many generations of people will be changed when you listen and obey. Who will you disciple today?

CREATED TO BE | BUILD GOD'S KINGDOM

Day
Twenty-
Seven

Day 27

YOU FEED THEM

by Niles Holsinger

Late in the afternoon the twelve disciples came to him and said, “Send the crowds away to the nearby villages and farms, so they can find food and lodging for the night. There is nothing to eat here in this remote place.” But Jesus said, “You feed them.” Luke 9:12–13 (NLT)



I love the story in Luke 9 about Jesus feeding the 5,000. As it gets late and the multitude gets hungry, we see the disciples show extreme concern for the people who were following Jesus. They wanted to see the people fed, sheltered, and cared for. They knew Jesus had the answer for what the people needed. He had the influence and the authority to send them away to go home, eat, and rest. But Jesus did not send the people away. He looked at His disciples

and responded the same way that He does today, “You feed them.”

There is no doubt this world is in great need of a Savior. There is hunger, pain, hate, and all kinds of evil. There are people hurting and being hurt and people who have no hope. You can find them in faraway countries on the other side of the world and down the street from where we live.

At one point or another, we have all witnessed this pain and hopelessness around us and have responded with prayer

to our mighty, loving God to act. And Jesus' response is, and has been from the days He walked this earth, "You feed them."

God has chosen us, His children, to be His hands and feet. He has chosen to work in and through us to reach those around us who need Him. Not only has He chosen us, but He has equipped us for this work. Each and every one of us has been beautifully and wonderfully created. We have been given unique gifts, talents, and personalities that He can use to speak into the lives of those around us who are hurting. All we have to do is obey.

Jesus instructed the disciples to gather together what they could find and to bring it to Him. Taking what they had, He blessed it and fed the multitude.

What do you have? What gifts or talents do you have to bring to Jesus? Be bold, present them to Him, and allow Him to use them to feed those around you who are hurting. Maybe you feel called to the nations or to the single mom down the street. Let's not be a people who witness the hurting around us hoping someone will act. Let us go boldly before the Father and ask Him to send *us*. We "freely received," now it is time for us to "freely give" (Matthew 10:5-8). Who is God calling you to feed today?

PRAYER

Lord, open my eyes to the people around the world and down the street who need You. Use me to reach them. I willingly give You all I have. Take it all. Take all of me. Use me to be Your hands and feet. In Jesus' name, Amen.

CREATED TO BE | BUILD GOD'S KINGDOM

Day
Twenty-
Eight

Day 28

PREPARING TO BE SENT

by Robert Morris

So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." John 20:21



When I was a young evangelist, I traveled to different churches to do prophetic ministry. One day, a friend of mine came to me and said, "I would like to go with you and minister prophetically." When he said this, I heard the Lord say, "He's not ready yet." So I responded, "When the Lord tells me to take you, I will."

He asked me again six months later, and again six months after that. But each time, the Lord said to me, "He's not ready."

Then one day he came to me and something was different. He had tears in

his eyes and said, "Will you forgive me? I told you I was ready, but God has been showing me some junk in my life, and He has been doing a work in my heart. I just have to tell you; I am *not* ready."

It was then the Lord said to me, "Now he's ready, because when I speak through him, he will know it's Me and not him." Everyone is called by God to do something, but there's a difference between being *called* and being *sent*. In John 20:21, Jesus says to His disciples, "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

I want you to think about this for a moment. When did God send Jesus? The Bible says He didn't begin His ministry until He was 30 years old! He had to go through a process between the *call* and the *send*. And He's not the only one: Abraham wasn't *sent* until he was 100 years old, and Moses wasn't sent until 80. Joseph spent years in prison before he was sent at 30, and though David was called as a young boy, he wasn't sent as king until he was 30.

Like these great men of the Bible, perhaps God is taking you through a process between the *call* and the *send*, so when you're sent, you will rely on His strength and not on your own. You see, we're all called, but we choose how we respond to the process.

So what do you do between the call and the send? You work on developing a commitment to:

1. **Relationships.** Find people who will help you go farther in your walk with Christ.
2. **Friendships.** Friendships are deeper than relationships; friendships are for life.
3. **Stewardship.** Be a good steward with your finances, time, energy, and resources.
4. **Fellowship.** Commit yourself to the local church by serving and tithing.
5. **Spiritual leadership.** Submit to the leadership of the elders and spiritual authority of the church.

What has God called you to do? Whatever it is, He wants to put His anointing and authority on you before He sends you, and He does it as you develop these commitments. Are you ready to be sent?

PRAYER

Holy Spirit, I thank You for the callings You put on our lives and for the gifts You've invested in us. Lord, we don't want to just be called and gifted. Lord, we want to be sent and anointed by the Holy Spirit. We want to be able to help people. We want to be able to change this world. We want to be able to change our culture and change our generation. So Lord, I pray You would draw us to You today and develop these commitments in our lives. In Jesus' name. Amen.

WHAT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT SAYING TO ME?

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FOR FURTHER STUDY

Proverbs 12:26; Proverbs 18:24; Proverbs 27:6; Romans 11:29; Ephesians 4:1

***Created to Be
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My Only Hope

Vocalist Mark Harris

VERSE 1

Lord almighty hear my plea
When the devil comes to me
Let Your Word, my weapon be
That I may live in victory
That I may live in victory

CHORUS

This is the anthem of my soul
Christ in me, my only hope
No other name, no other throne
Christ in me, my only hope
Christ in me, my only hope

VERSE 2

Of my sins, You know them all
Still You love me through the fall
Worn and blistered soul I am
It's only by Your grace I stand

BRIDGE

Though the storms rage on
Though the darkness comes
Still our God will have His say
For the wind stands still

And the demons fall
At the mention of His name

VERSE 3

When I arrive at heaven's gates
And I see Jesus face to face
I'll fall and worship at His feet
The One who bore the cross for me
The One who bore the cross for me

"My Only Hope" by Mark Harris & Cavanaugh James

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My Heart Is Yours

*Vocalists Brandan Bustamante &
Rebecca Hart*

VERSE

You are justice
You are mercy
You are freedom, righteousness

You are brilliance
You are virtue
In Your beauty, I find rest

PRE-CHORUS

All my hope is found in You
All I am has been consumed

CHORUS

Come Jesus whisper Your desire
My heart is surrendered
Come heaven burn with holy fire
My heart is Yours

BRIDGE

Casting down all idols
For more of Your presence
I'm laying my life down
(For more of who You are)

*"My Heart Is Yours" by Brandon Bustamante,
Aaron Crider, Rebecca Hart & Andrew Morris*

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Waiting on a Whisper

Vocalist Kirsten Takape

VERSE

Waiting on a whisper
Waiting on You, Lord
All my hope is in You
You're all that I adore
I know there is no other
Your voice will calm the storm
Waiting on a whisper
Waiting on You, Lord

CHORUS

Your words are life to me
Your words are all I need

BRIDGE

I will wait for You
I will not forget Your promises
I will wait for You
Every word You speak
I'll hold on to

*"Waiting on a Whisper" by Zach Cheatham,
Eric Orson & Tim Sheppard*

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I Believe in You

Vocalist Matt Birkenfeld

VERSE 1

Chaos and fire can chase our
 desire away
But Your promise of hope rises up
 out of the flames
There is no verdict no lie
That separates me from Your hand
You are the first and the last forever
 Your Word will stand

CHORUS

I believe in You

I believe in You

VERSE 2

Courage and light break through
the night like a wave

It's a beautiful dance when we step
over the grave

There is no verdict no lie

That separates me from Your hand

You are the first and the last forever
Your Word will stand

BRIDGE

I'm not holding back a single moment
of my life from You

No, I'm not holding back a single
moment of my life from You

I'm not holding back a single moment
of my life from You

I'm not holding back a single moment
of my life from You

"I Believe in You" by Josh Alltop & Rita Springer

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Holy Is the Lamb

Vocalists Rebecca Hart & Cole Novak

VERSE 1

With one voice, with one sound
Our praises rise, with one heart

Your language, from our tongue
Refined by fire, for Your kingdom

CHORUS

Holy, holy is the Lamb, is the Lamb
Holy, holy is the Lamb, is the Lamb
We give glory, to the Lamb, to the Lamb

Holy, holy is the Lamb

VERSE 2

Your greatness, Your splendor
We magnify, forever
All power, All wisdom
All majesty, All dominion

*"Holy Is the Lamb" by Anna Byrd, Rebecca Hart,
David Moore & Tim Sheppard*

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Won My Heart

Vocalist Zach Cheatham

VERSE 1

I am Yours, You are mine
I need nothing else
As the stars in the sky
By Your hands, I'm always held

PRE-CHORUS

You restore my soul
I will fear no evil

CHORUS

You have won my heart
You have won my heart
All I am is Yours
You have won my heart

VERSE 2

You have not left my side
Even in my wandering
As the sun will rise,
Always new is Your mercy

BRIDGE

Hallelujah, Hallelujah
You are great and greatly to be praised

"Won My Heart" by Zach Cheatham

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As Long as I'm Breathing

Vocalist Austin Benjamin

VERSE 1

You are the sunrise
You awaken my heart
You've given me life, God
You've given me life

VERSE 2

You are the beauty
You enrapture my days
I'm in awe of Your goodness
I'm in awe of Your ways

CHORUS

I will worship
As long as I'm breathing
As long as my heart is
Beating in my chest
I will worship
In every season
For You alone are
The reason that I live

VERSE 3

You are the fullness
You are more than enough
My cup overflows with
Your great mercy and love

BRIDGE

There is no other, no one more worthy
There is none greater, above or
beyond You
All honor and glory is Yours

VERSE 4

When I am broken
When I'm empty and torn
When I'm caught in the crossfire
Of this life's bitter war

Let my soul remind me
Just to be still and know
You are sovereign not shaken
You are Lord over all

I will still worship
As long as I'm breathing
As long as my heart is
Beating in my chest
I will worship
In every season

For You alone are
The reason that I live

"As Long as I'm Breathing" by Mark Harris, Mary Elizabeth Miller, Erik Snodgrass & Michael Lewis

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Under the Shadow

Vocalist David Moore

VERSE 1

Let my words be few enough to hear
The beating of Your heart
To know that You are near
Still my soul to quiet all the noise
To only hear Your voice
And lose myself in You

CHORUS

Under the shadow, under the shadow
of Your wings
Keep me in Your shadow here
in Your refuge I am safe

VERSE 2

Now my eyes have seen the battles won
How hell is overcome
And my victory is You

*"Under the Shadow" by Zach Cheatham,
Matthew Harris, Alena Moore & David Moore*

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Time

Vocalist Josh Coad

VERSE 1

Oh, the terrors of the night are calling
And the worries of the day say
 You're distant

PRE-CHORUS

But You stand above the noise
Turning trial into joy

CHORUS

For You are not bound by time or
 ever caught by surprise
And You are not smaller than our years
Help me see through this life
 into Your great design
And know that You're stronger
 than my fear

VERSE 2

The One who was and is and is to come
What could ever overthrow the reign
 of Your love

BRIDGE

Rock unbreaking, love unfading
You are beginning and the end
You are near me, You have called me
To know You past the end of time
Past the end of time
Past the end of time
Past the end of time
Past the end of time

"Time" by Josh Coad

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It Is Well

Vocalist Anna Byrd

VERSE 1

When peace like a river,
 attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll
Whatever my lot, thou hast
 taught me to say
It is well, it is well, with my soul

CHORUS

It is well, with my soul
It is well, it is well with my soul

VERSE 2

My sin, oh, the bliss of this
glorious thought
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it
no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
o my soul

CHORUS

It is well, with my soul
It is well, it is well with my soul

VERSE 3

And, Lord, haste the day when
my faith shall be sight,
the clouds be rolled back as a scroll
the trump shall resound, and the
Lord shall descend, even so, it is well
with my soul

CHORUS

It is well, with my soul
It is well, it is well with my soul
It is well, it is well with my soul
It is well, it is well with my soul

*"It Is Well" by Walker Beach &
Horatio Gates Spafford*

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Memory Verses

DAYS 1–3

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

ROMANS 10:17

DAYS 4–6

But Jesus looked at them and said to them “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

MATTHEW 19:26

DAYS 7–9

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

1 JOHN 3:1 (NIV)

DAYS 10–12

A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.

ECCLESIASTES 4:12 (NLT)

DAYS 16–18

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

HEBREWS 11:6

DAYS 22–24

“And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

MATTHEW 16:19

DAYS 13–15

“By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

JOHN 13:35

DAYS 19–21

Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and He will establish your plans.

PROVERBS 16:3 (NIV)

DAYS 25–28

“For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”

LUKE 17:21B



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