



Life for the Kingdom

Chapel
YOUNG ADULTS



WELCOME!

Young adulthood is a season when many of the patterns that will shape the rest of our lives are taking root. We are making decisions about money, work, relationships, purpose, and the kind of people we want to become. Jesus does not invite us simply to add faith to those decisions. He invites us to let His Kingdom become the reality that shapes all of them.

Roots & Fire is built around a simple conviction: mature disciples need both roots and fire. Roots are the deep convictions, practices, and character that make a life steady in Jesus. Fire is the radical, visible expression of His Kingdom through that life. Roots without fire can become private and safe. Fire without roots can burn hot for a moment and disappear. Jesus forms us deeply so He can send us boldly.

In Life for the Kingdom, we will explore what happens when a rooted life turns outward. We will look at generosity, evangelism, justice and mercy, and mission and vocation - not as separate Christian activities, but as ways the reign of Jesus becomes visible through ordinary people. As Christmas approaches, two personal devotionals will draw us back to the center of it all: the King who came near and the Kingdom that is still coming in fullness.

Together, we will:

- ♦ Learn to recognize the difference between a faith that is merely private and a life that is available to the Kingdom of God.
- ♦ Develop rooted convictions about money, people, compassion, work, and purpose.
- ♦ Practice concrete acts of generosity, witness, mercy, and Kingdom mission.
- ♦ Pay attention to where the Holy Spirit is inviting us beyond comfort and self-protection.
- ♦ Enter the Christmas season remembering that our life for the Kingdom is a response to the King who first came for us.

**Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness,
and all these things will be given to you as well.**

— Matthew 6:33



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DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

COME REGULARLY: Building a strong relationship with Jesus and others in your group begins with showing up consistently. Your presence matters - not just for you, but for the entire group. *Be present, not perfect - come as you are and be open to learning, growing, and encouraging one another along the way.*

PARTICIPATE: Your story and experiences reflect the character of God. Sharing what He is doing in your life helps others grow in their faith and deepens relationships within the group. *Listen actively and seek to understand before responding. Honor differences and recognize that everyone brings a unique perspective to the conversation.*

KEEP IT SAFE: We are all responsible for creating a space where everyone feels heard and loved. Give room for others to share by listening well and responding with kindness. Avoid quick answers or judgments and focus on offering support and encouragement. *Be patient and gracious, understanding that spiritual growth takes time.*

CONFIDENTIALITY: What's shared in the group stays in the group. Protecting each other's honesty and vulnerability fosters trust and growth. *Respect and honor one another's stories with care and discretion.*

KNOW & BE KNOWN: Take time to listen and truly know one another. As you do, you'll have opportunities to pray, encourage, and see God's Kingdom advance in each other's lives. *Commit to praying for your group members throughout the week, trusting that God is at work in every season of life.*

Note for Group Leaders: *If a serious concern arises—such as harm to a person or a need for further pastoral care—encourage the individual to seek support from a pastor or bring it to a pastor's attention yourself. Ensuring safety and care is a priority for our community.*

STRUCTURE FOR EACH SESSION

KEY TRUTH:

Each session names a core Kingdom truth that gives us both roots and fire - something to become established in, and something to embody in the world.

READ:

Engage with the Scripture passages. Underline or highlight words, phrases, or ideas the Holy Spirit brings to your attention.

REFLECT:

Discuss what the passages reveal about God's nature, His Kingdom, and the kind of people Jesus is forming us to become.

RESPOND:

Share honestly about your own experience. Pay attention both to where this truth needs deeper roots in you and where it may require courageous action.

BREAKTHROUGH (Let's Pray Together):

Pray for one another and invite the Holy Spirit to bring conviction, courage, healing, and practical direction. Expect God to lead us into real obedience

NEXT STEPS:

Choose a concrete way to practice the week's truth. The goal is not to complete an assignment, but to give Jesus room to form us and express His Kingdom through us.

WEEK 1:

INTRODUCING ROOTS & FIRE

Live Teaching / Notes Session

THE FRAME

Jesus is not only trying to get us to believe the right things; He is forming a people who can faithfully carry His Kingdom into the world. Colossians 2 gives us the image of being rooted and built up in Christ. Matthew 5 gives us the image of visible light - a people whose lives cause others to see the goodness of the Father. We need both.

Roots are the deep structures of discipleship: trust, character, conviction, habits, and an identity anchored in Jesus. Roots keep us steady when life is confusing, costly, or unimpressive. Fire is the outward edge of discipleship: courage, costly obedience, witness, generosity, mercy, risk, and mission. Fire makes the reign of Jesus visible in places that do not yet look like His Kingdom.

The danger is choosing one side. Roots without fire can become respectable Christianity that is stable but never surrendered enough to change anything. Fire without roots can become intensity without endurance. The invitation of this series is to let Jesus deepen both: rooted enough to endure, surrendered enough to burn.

KEY IDEAS

- The Kingdom of God is not merely a future destination; in Jesus, God's reign has broken into the present and is still moving toward its fullness.
- Discipleship forms us into the kind of people through whom the Kingdom can be expressed.
- Every topic in this series has a root and a fire: a deep inner formation and a visible outward expression.
- The question is not only, "What do I believe?" but also, "What does the rule of Jesus look like through my actual life?"
- Young adulthood is a powerful season to decide what kind of life will become normal for us before comfort, career, and consumption make the decision for us.

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PERSONAL REFLECTION FOR THIS WEEK

- Where does your faith currently feel well-rooted? Where does it feel shallow or easily disrupted?
- Where do you see “fire” in your life - places where following Jesus is visible, costly, or courageous?
- Which is easier for you: inward formation or outward risk? Why?
- Ask the Holy Spirit: “Where do you want to deepen my roots, and where do you want to light a fire?”

- ♦ Where do you see “fire” in your life - places where following Jesus is visible, costly, or courageous?

- ♦ Which is easier for you: inward formation or outward risk? Why?

- ♦ Ask the Holy Spirit: “Where do you want to deepen my roots, and where do you want to light a fire?”

WEEK 2: GENEROSITY

2 Corinthians 8:1-9;
Luke 12:13-34, John 3:16

Key Truth:

God wants to form us
into His radically generous
image for our sake.

READ :

John 3:16 - The foundational truth of our discipleship is that God gave His one and only son.

2 Corinthians 8:1-9 - Paul points to the Macedonian churches, whose joy and poverty overflowed into extraordinary generosity, and then grounds their giving in the self-giving grace of Jesus.

Luke 12:13-34 - Jesus confronts greed, anxiety, and the illusion that life is secured by possessions, then invites His disciples to seek the Kingdom and live generously.

REFLECT:

God is moving every person who says yes to His Lordship from owners to stewards, from containers to conduits, and from selfish to selfless. And nothing reflects where we stand in this process more clearly than what we do with our time, energy, and finances.

We live in a world that measures success by how much we can attain and keep. God measures success not just by what we give, but even more so by why we give. The why behind the what will always reveal whether what we do is ultimately a selfish act or a selfless one.

God “so loved” the world. This is His why. That He gave His only Son. This is His what. And His “what” wasn’t minimal. It was extravagantly His best.

For the church in Macedonia, their why was “for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord’s people.” Their what was extravagant: they gave “even beyond their ability.”

One might ask, “What could inspire such a posture of extravagant giving?”

Jesus gives us a revelation in Luke 12 that offers freedom from the fear of scarcity and invites us into the extravagant life of generosity with God. Our Father knows what we need. He cares for us. He provides for us. And He has been pleased to give us the Kingdom.

God is so confident in His ability to provide that He even invites His people to test Him in this truth. In Malachi 3:10, God essentially says, “Trust Me with what you have, and see if I won’t open the floodgates of heaven.”

Generosity, then, isn’t simply about what leaves our hands. It reveals what has captured our hearts. When we trust the generosity of God, we are freed to become generous like God.

Our testimony shows us that we are part of the larger story. God didn’t just save us from something (brokenness, sin, death), but He rescued us to something — participating in His restoration and new creation in the world.

Application: Generosity is bigger than charitable giving. Money, time, attention, homes, skills, cars, meals, influence, and availability can all become Kingdom resources. The invitation is not irresponsibility. It is stewardship with God: refusing to organize our lives around accumulation and learning the freedom of asking, ‘Jesus, what have You entrusted to me, and who is it for?’

ROOTS

Generosity grows from trust that God is our provider, not from pressure or guilt.

Everything we have is received before it is managed - we are stewards, not owners.

FIRE

Kingdom generosity joyfully releases money, time, attention, space, and ability for the sake of others.

Our trust becomes visible when giving is concrete and costly enough to reshape how we live.

RESPOND (Discussion Questions):

1. In 2 Corinthians 8, what seems to make the Macedonians generous even though they do not have much?
2. Where are you most tempted to look to money, possessions, or control for security?
3. What resource has God entrusted to you right now - money, time, space, skill, attention, relationships - that could become more available to His Kingdom?
4. Has God ever stretched you in your giving?
What was that experience and outcome like?

BREAKTHROUGH (Let's Pray Together!):

- Where do you feel fear, scarcity, or protectiveness when you think about living more generously?
- What would open-handed trust in God look like for you in this season?

Prayer prompt: Pray that the Father would reveal His care, free each person from fear and scarcity, and show them one specific way to release what He has entrusted to them for someone else.

As you pray, leave space to listen. If you sense a Scripture, encouragement, or impression for someone, share it humbly and invite them to weigh it with the Lord.

NEXT STEPS:

Scripture engagement: Read Matthew 6:19-34 slowly three times this week. Notice every connection Jesus makes between treasure, anxiety, the Father, and the Kingdom.

☐ **Spiritual practice:** Do one act of intentional generosity that is significant enough to be felt - give money, host a meal, share something valuable, or give a block of time without expecting anything in return.

☐ **Reflection:** At the end of the week, journal: “What did generosity reveal about what I trust?”

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WEEK 3: EVANGELISM

Luke 15:1-10; 2 Corinthians 5:14-20

Key Truth:

People who have received the good news become people who carry good news.

READ :

Luke 15:1-10 - Jesus describes the heart of God through stories of a shepherd and a woman who actively seek what is lost and rejoice when it is found.

2 Corinthians 5:14-20 - Paul describes believers as people compelled by Christ's love and entrusted with the message and ministry of reconciliation.

REFLECT:

Evangelism can be a scary or uncomfortable topic. For some of us the idea of stepping out and talking about Jesus to people who aren't yet following him feels like jumping off a cliff without a parachute. For others, evangelism can draw up prior experiences of people trying to be argued into faith or guilt and pressuring someone towards a responding to the "good news."

We are first and foremost followers of Jesus, which means we want to approach every aspect of our faith the way Jesus did. We see in Luke 15 that Jesus shares heaven's heart for people who are far from God. Tax collectors & sinners were drawn to Him. What if the same was true of us as followers of Jesus.

When we are moved by the heart of heaven, people will naturally respond to us. When we carry God's heart for those far from him, they will begin to be drawn nearer.

Our foundation in evangelism is to be grounded in God's heart for those who don't yet know him. God is radical in His pursuit of people! He leaves ninety-nine sheep to go after the one who is lost. He diligently searches for people like the woman who flipped her house upside down to find her lost coin.

Do we believe that God pursues us that eagerly? That God is pursuing others far from Him that eagerly as well?

2 Corinthians 5 builds on that idea. God's love compels us because God has given us the ministry of reconciliation. He has already cleared the way back to Him in Christ. The hurdles have already been cleared away, all that is left is for people to choose to come home. It is God's love, based on what God has already done in Jesus that moves us to reach out. Rooted in what God has already done, we blaze with the fire of a message that can transform the world: God already loves you and is eagerly awaiting your return home to Him.

Application: The root of evangelism is love: knowing the gospel deeply enough that people are not projects and rejection does not threaten us. The fire is courage: praying for people, listening for the Spirit, crossing social distance, telling our story, offering prayer, and speaking about Jesus naturally and clearly. A rooted witness can be both bold and genuinely loving.

ROOTS

Evangelism starts with the heart of the Father for people, not with pressure to perform.

We are witnesses to what Jesus has done, not salespeople responsible for controlling another person's response.

FIRE

Love becomes witness when we move toward people, take relational risks, and speak the good news of Jesus.

Evangelism trains us to follow the Spirit beyond comfort through prayer, testimony, invitation, and courageous conversation.

RESPOND (Discussion Questions):

1. What do Luke 15 and 2 Corinthians 5 reveal about God's posture toward people who are far from Him?
2. When you think about evangelism, what emotions surface first - excitement, fear, guilt, awkwardness, compassion, something else? Why?
3. Who is one person already in your life toward whom God may be inviting you to become more prayerful, intentional, and courageous?

BREAKTHROUGH (Let's Pray Together!):

- What is the biggest barrier that keeps you from talking about Jesus naturally with people you care about?
- Where do you need the Holy Spirit to give you love, discernment, or courage?

Prayer prompt: Pray by name for people your group members care about. Ask the Holy Spirit to show where He is already at work, open natural doors for conversation, and give each person courage without pressure or manipulation.

As you pray, leave space to listen. If you sense a Scripture, encouragement, or impression for someone, share it humbly and invite them to weigh it with the Lord.

NEXT STEPS:

- ❑ **Scripture engagement:** : Read John 4:4-42 and notice how Jesus listens, asks questions, tells the truth, and reveals Himself in conversation.
- ❑ **Spiritual practice:** Make a “three people” prayer list. Pray daily for three people in your normal life and ask God for one concrete way to move toward each of them.
- ❑ **Practice your story:** Prepare a two-minute version of how Jesus has become good news in your actual life. Keep it honest, simple, and centered on Him.

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WEEK 4: JUSTICE & MERCY

Isaiah 58:6-12; Luke 10:25-37

Key Truth:

The Kingdom takes root in us as God gives us His heart, and it catches fire when we move toward suffering with costly mercy.

READ:

Isaiah 58:6-12 - God confronts religious practice disconnected from justice and describes worship that loosens oppression, feeds the hungry, shelters the vulnerable, and repairs what is broken.

Luke 10:25-37 - Jesus answers "Who is my neighbor?" with a story in which mercy crosses social boundaries and becomes concrete, costly action.

REFLECT:

In Isaiah 58, God indicates His displeasure with Israel's religious exercises. They had fasted and humbled themselves, but God was not pleased. Their religious practices were not pleasing to God because they mistreated one another. It is not God's heart that we would seek His presence while neglecting those around us. The Lord sees and cares about the poor, oppressed, naked, and downtrodden. When His people are callous to the needs of the people around them, God challenges us: we love Him by loving the people He created. His presence is quick to seek out and bless those who care for those who are hurting and broken.

God is not only working to cultivate our heart to love Him, God's heart is that we would embody love - as He is love (1 John 4:16-17). This is complete only when we love God with all our hearts, and we love our neighbors as we love ourselves (Matthew 22:37-39). God's love is meant to dig down deep into our souls, transforming us at the very core of who we are until it is impossible for us not to see, be moved, and respond to the needs of the people around us. Are you becoming love?

Love sees, love is moved, love acts.

As God's love roots in our hearts, rewiring everything of how we see the world and know God and others, we find ourselves radically loving the one in front of us. Jesus has a word for this: our "neighbor". Our neighbor is the person life has brought us together with in the current moment. Sharing similar faith backgrounds, life experiences, or social groups is not what makes someone a neighbor to Jesus: them being next to us is what makes us a neighbor.

So when we see deep need in the one in front of us, we allow ourselves to be moved and to respond. Not because we know or like the person (that does make it easier, of course), but because they are a person, and they matter to God, so they matter to us. And we step in; sometimes sacrificially. The Samaritan spends two denarii, that's two days wages, on the man who was wounded by the robbers.

This is what Jesus says God is looking for. People who love God so fully that they love those around them radically. This is how God's Kingdom flows into ours.

Application: The root is allowing God's compassion and righteousness to reshape what we notice and care about. The fire is refusing to remain a spectator. We ask where people are overlooked, excluded, exploited, lonely, hungry, unsafe, or burdened - and then we bring whatever part of heaven God has put in our hands. We cannot solve every injustice, but we can become the kind of people who no longer walk past the wounded.

ROOTS

Justice and mercy begin with learning to see people through the compassionate heart of God.

Worship that does not reshape how we treat vulnerable people is incomplete.

FIRE

Kingdom compassion crosses boundaries and costs us time, comfort, attention, money, or social ease.

Justice and mercy move us from noticing what is broken to joining Jesus in practical acts of repair, protection, and restoration.

RESPOND (Discussion Questions):

1. What do Isaiah 58 and Luke 10 show about the relationship between devotion to God and care for people?
2. What kinds of suffering or injustice are easiest for you to overlook because they are outside your normal world?
3. Who is "on the side of the road" near you right now - in your workplace, school, neighborhood, church, or city - and what might it look like to move toward them?

BREAKTHROUGH (Let's Pray Together!):

- Where have busyness, discomfort, fear, or distance made it easier for you to pass by a person or problem?
- Ask God to bring one person, group, or need clearly to mind. What compassion do you want Him to grow in you?

Prayer prompt: Pray for God to give the group His eyes for people who are overlooked or hurting. While we cannot rescue everyone, ask for both compassion and discernment, and for one concrete act of mercy or justice that each person can take this week.

As you pray, leave space to listen. If you sense a Scripture, encouragement, or impression for someone, share it humbly and invite them to weigh it with the Lord.

NEXT STEPS:

☐ **Scripture engagement:** Read Micah 6:8, Isaiah 58:6-12, and Matthew 25:31-46. Write down what each passage says God values.

☐ Spiritual practice: Choose one act of proximity. Spend time with, serve, listen to, or learn from people whose experience is normally outside your own.

☐ **Mercy practice:** Meet one practical need this week in a way that protects the dignity of the person receiving help.

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WEEK 5:

MISSION & VOCATION

Genesis 1:26-28 : 1 Corinthians 3:9
2 Corinthians 6: 1 Matthew 28:18-20

Key Truth:

Your ordinary life is not separate from God's mission; you were made to reflect God's Kingdom in all you do, everywhere you go.

READ :

Genesis 1:26-28 - Human beings are created in God's image and given meaningful responsibility of co-laboring with Him.

2 Corinthians 5:17-20 - We carry the authority of Heaven everywhere we go with a message of returning to God.

Matthew 28:18-20 - The risen Jesus sends His disciples into the world to make disciples under His authority and with His presence.

REFLECT:

Why am I here, and what is my purpose?

These questions are almost impossible not to wrestle with as we grow into adulthood. Why? Because God has placed a longing in the heart of every human being not only to discover the answer to that question, but to fulfill it.

Throughout the Old Testament, we see God rest His presence on ordinary people in order to accomplish extraordinary things for His glory. Different people, in different times, with different lives. But the mission was always moving in the same direction: removing the obstacles between humanity and God and calling people back into intimate relationship with Him.

Then Jesus comes into the picture.

And Jesus doesn't just show us who God is. He shows us what it looks like for a human life to be completely surrendered to the mission of God while being empowered by His Spirit. Everywhere Jesus goes, He reveals the Father, heals what is broken, restores what has been lost, welcomes the outsider, confronts what separates people from God, and announces that the Kingdom of God has come near as He demonstrates it through "signs and wonders."

But then Jesus does something incredible. He invites ordinary people to do what He did.

To Simon the fisherman, He says, "Follow me, and I will make you a fisher of men." Jesus takes what is already in Simon's hands, his story, his wiring, his experience, and redirects it toward something greater than himself. This time, however, God's presence doesn't just rest on him, but lives inside of him.

And He does the same with us.

With our giftings, passions, personalities, and history, God only sees potential. His Spirit lives in us and moves through us in all the spheres of influence we have. At The Chapel, we call this "All of God, in all of us, for all the world." The presence that empowered people for the mission of God now lives within the people of God. This means that wherever we go, His presence gives us access to the same authority of Heaven that Jesus walked in on Earth.

This is where our longing for purpose begins to find its fulfillment. Our purpose isn't ultimately found in a job title, a platform, a career, or even discovering the perfect thing we were "made to do." Those things may become expressions of our purpose, but they are not the source of it. Our purpose is found in joining Jesus in His.

Paul calls us "God's fellow workers" and "ambassadors for Christ." Jesus invites us into His mission of reconciliation, restoration, healing, and revealing the Father to the world around us through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Your home, workplace, relationships, gifts, resources, creativity, and story all become places where the life of Jesus can flow through you toward others.

Maybe the longing in our hearts for purpose was never meant to be fulfilled by finding something significant to do, but by joining Someone significant in what He is already doing. What makes us "radical" in Jesus' mission isn't the scope of ambition we have or lack thereof. Instead, it's inviting the Holy Spirit into the everyday ordinary of life so that He alone can make it extraordinary.



Application: The root of vocation is identity and faithfulness: we belong to Jesus before we achieve anything, and we learn to offer our gifts and responsibilities to Him. The fire is mission: asking how our actual work can become a place of love, miracles, prayer, excellence, truth, creativity, reconciliation, witness, and disciple-making. Instead of only asking, 'What career will make me happy?' Kingdom vocation asks, 'Jesus, what have You put in my hands, where have You placed me, and what does Your reign look like here?'

ROOTS

Your worth comes from belonging to Jesus, not from finding the perfect job or maximizing your potential. Vocation is faithful stewardship of the people, gifts, work, and opportunities already entrusted to you.

FIRE

Mission begins when we stop separating spiritual life from ordinary life and carry the Kingdom into the places we already go.

A sent life treats work, relationships, gifts, and place as opportunities for prayer, the miraculous, love, witness, excellence, reconciliation, and disciple-making.

RESPOND (Discussion Questions):

1. What do these passages suggest about the relationship between ordinary work and God's purposes?
2. Where are you most tempted to define vocation by status, money, achievement, or the pressure to "find your calling"?
3. Think about the places you already spend your week. What would change if you saw one of those places as a Kingdom assignment rather than simply a responsibility?

BREAKTHROUGH (Let's Pray Together!):

- ♦ Where do you feel confusion, disappointment, ambition, or fear around your future or vocation?
- ♦ What gift, responsibility, relationship, or place do you want to offer back to Jesus tonight?

As you pray, leave space to listen. If you sense a Scripture, encouragement, or impression for someone, share it humbly and invite them to weigh it with the Lord.

☐ **Scripture engagement:** Read Colossians 3:12-24 and write down what it would look like to embody each quality in your actual workplace, school, or home.

☐ **Spiritual practice:** Begin one workday this week with a commissioning prayer: “Jesus, this place belongs to You. Show me how to carry Your Kingdom here today.”

□ Mission map: Draw your normal weekly environments - work, school, gym, neighborhood, friend groups, online spaces. Circle one place where you sense God inviting you to become more intentional.

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CHRISTMAS DEVOTIONAL 1:

THE KING BECAME LOW

God does not save the world from a distance.

READ :

John 1:1-14; Philippians 2:5-8

REFLECT:

Christmas begins with a movement from an enthroned heavenly reality to a humble feeding trough for animals. The Son, who eternally shared in the glory and communion of the Father and Holy Spirit, now took on flesh, entering fully into our humanity. The One in whom all things hold together willingly became an infant who had to be held, a helpless baby who relied fully on His parents for His survival.

This is one of the greatest revelations found in Christ's coming. He did not come only as one of us, a human being, but as the King of the universe who became like us. Loss, grief, pain, suffering, annoyances, temptation, betrayal, and even death. All of the things we experience living in a broken world, He experienced, yet without saying yes to sin.

But why?

Why would God choose to reveal Himself this way? Was it simply to prove something to us? Maybe it was to show us that even God could experience the same broken realities we face. He too could be born a vulnerable infant. He too could experience death and loss. He too could wash feet, at least once, to teach us a lesson about humility.

But if this were the reason, it would be a shallow one. It would reveal to us that God is, at best, relatable.

But God is more than relatable. He is accessible.

Jesus didn't come simply to make God relatable. He came to reveal that God is the God of those who weep, who mourn, who suffer, who are overlooked, who have been forgotten, who have been neglected, misunderstood, and even abused. In Jesus, God did not observe the broken realities of human existence from a distance. He entered fully into them.

Jesus became low, not simply to show us that the King of the universe understands what it's like to be low, but to reveal something far greater about the King Himself.

Key Truth:

The incarnation reveals a God who moves toward us - and forms a people willing to move toward the world in the same self-giving love.

Jesus didn't come just to give us a lesson in humility. He came to reveal the very nature of God as the humble One.

Jesus says in John 14:9, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father." When you see Jesus' willingness to become low, you don't just see a humble decision He made. You see the very nature of God.

The manger isn't God temporarily setting aside what He is like. The manger reveals what the God on the throne has always been like.

Yes, God is eternally enthroned as the greatest Being and Creator of the universe. But ask the question, "What is God like?"

God is like Jesus.

And what is Jesus like?

He is not only the Savior of the world, but a servant to all. Jesus tells us, "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant," and, "The greatest among you will be your servant" (Matthew 20:26; 23:11).

Why should this matter to us?

Because if this is what our King is like, then those who belong to His Kingdom are invited to become like their King. A life of humility and self-giving love isn't simply something we are commanded to imitate. It is the life of Christ we are invited to participate in.

We can take comfort in knowing that God understands our lowest moments more than anyone. But we should also leave with the courage to live like our King, to serve with the heart of a King and rule with the heart of a servant.

PERSONAL RESPONSE

1. Where have you most needed God to come near to you this year?
2. In what areas in your life do you see God inviting you to walk in His humble nature?
3. Who is God inviting you to move toward and serve this Christmas?

PRACTICE

Identify the person or people you feel the Lord inviting you to serve. Make a game plan to reach out and find a way to serve them in a Christlike way.

CHRISTMAS DEVOTIONAL 2: THE KING IS COMING

Advent teaches us to live toward a Kingdom that has begun but is not yet complete.

READ :

Isaiah 9:2-7; Revelation 21:1-5

REFLECT:

In Christmas we see a powerful and profound reality; Jesus, God the Son, has joined Himself with creation in humanity. Heaven has come to earth; a new day dawns. Deep darkness has been met with a great light. The Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace has taken on flesh and entered the story we live out in the most profound way.

As glorious as Christmas is, it is just the beginning. It sets and establishes a trajectory that continues through into our lives and into the ultimate end of all things. The child is born; the son that is given is the eternal King who reigns on David's throne. He has come to reveal who God is, and He has also come to rule; to set the way of all things right. He carries God's government, which grows and increases as He sits enthroned in heaven, the crucified and risen King of all of heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18).

What does Jesus do now? He rules! He continues to establish God's rule on the earth through the dynamic present of His Spirit in the body of his people, those who have been born anew.

In due time He returns again and all things are brought to completion. We live as people of a great hope; the end of the story has already been written, we can live with a confidence that God's new world swallows up all things. Death is exiled; pain and mourning becomes a distant memory. All that remains is a creation filled to overflowing and animated by the abundant life that God's presence radiates.

As God's people we are rooted in the eternal hope of the coming kingdom. It is a sure fact; a guaranteed outcome. The unsettled questions are not if the kingdom comes that way, only when it does and how it happens.

Key Truth:

Because the King has come and will come again, we can live with stubborn hope in the unfinished places of the world.

And as God's people we are also called into partnership with that reality already present and active. The rule of Jesus doesn't wait only for the second coming; it crashes into our world each and every day! The Kingdom comes as we tune our attention into God's active presence in the world and as we step out to partner with Him in what He invites us into. Life in the kingdom is an outward directed life; one in which we are called to live from God's rule in our lives towards the world.

What does that look like? An open hearted and generous outlook on life. Hearts that freely and joyfully give. It looks like noticing the brokenness in the world and responding with a compassion and kindness that is not of this world. It looks like doing our jobs with God and making space for God's presence to overflow into our vocation. It looks like a heart that breaks for each and every person to come home to the Father and responding to the Lord's nudges to carry that good news to others.

As we live from the Kingdom towards the world, the King who came at Christmas continues to come – renewing creation one nook and cranny at a time. He is making all things new.

PERSONAL RESPONSE

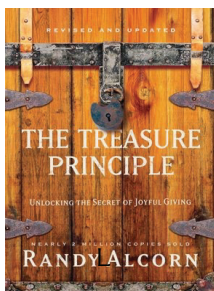
1. Where do you most need to remember that Jesus is not waiting to reign someday, but is already ruling as the crucified and risen King?
2. What unfinished place in your life or in the world needs the stubborn hope that Jesus will return and make all things new?
3. Where do you sense God inviting you to partner with His Kingdom this week through generosity, mercy, vocation, or witness?

PRACTICE

Choose one unfinished place in your life or in the world where you long to see Jesus make things new. Pray over it slowly, remembering that the King is already reigning and that His coming renewal is certain. Then ask, "Jesus, how are You inviting me to partner with Your Kingdom here this week?" Take action on whatever He says!

APPENDIX

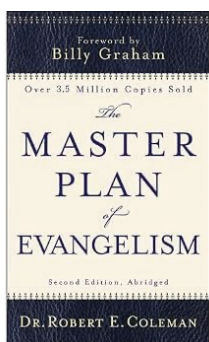
Suggested Reading



WEEK TWO:

The Treasure Principle

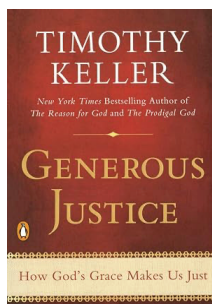
by Randy Alcorn - a short, practical exploration of storing treasure in God's Kingdom rather than living for accumulation.



WEEK THREE:

The Master Plan of Evangelism

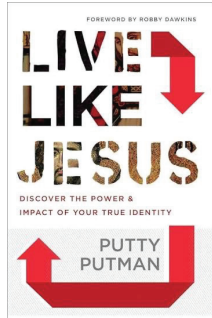
by Robert Coleman - a classic look at Jesus' relational approach to forming and sending disciples.



WEEK FOUR:

Generous Justice

by Timothy Keller - an exploration of how grace, mercy, and biblical justice belong together in Christian discipleship.



WEEK FIVE:

Live Like Jesus: Discover the Power and Impact of Your True Identity

by Putty Putman

APPENDIX

LIFE FOR THE KINGDOM AT A GLANCE

Roots and Fire: Deeply formed in Jesus. Radically available to His Kingdom.

Life for the Kingdom:		
Topic	Roots	Fire
Generosity	Trust God as provider; receive everything as stewardship	Release resources in concrete, costly ways
Evangelism	Receive the Father's heart and become secure in the good news	Move toward people, take relational risks, and speak about Jesus
Justice & Mercy	Learn God's compassion and His desire to make wrong things right	Cross boundaries and move toward suffering with practical mercy
Mission & Vocation	Belong to Jesus before achievement; steward ordinary life faithfully	Treat work, relationships, and place as Kingdom assignment



