



LUKE





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GETTING STARTED

WHAT IS JESUS XP?

Jesus XP is a cohort based, Jesus centered discipleship experience. Together, cohorts explore the ways Jesus connected with God and others by reading The Gospels, discovering practices that center us in the Jesus way and learning how to apprentice with Jesus in everyday life.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING A JESUS XP SESSION?

Jesus XP sessions include the following: check in, Bible reading and practice. The check in creates space for participants to unpack what Jesus is inviting them into through the Bible reading and practices. The Bible portion helps participants immerse themselves in the words and ways of Jesus. And practice exploration provides participants with tangible ways to connect with God, themselves and others.



THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

THEMES

OUTSIDERS

Luke sees the life of Jesus from an outsider's perspective. Luke is — a Gentile (a non-Jew), writing to Gentiles in the Roman Empire.

Luke's gospel is addressed to Theophilus (also a Gentile) whose name means "loved by God". Theophilus is perhaps a wealthy and influential benefactor of Luke and Paul's work, or Theophilus could be a generic title that applies to all followers of Jesus.

Luke tells stories about the marginalized finding Good News in Jesus — In Luke, these are often called "the poor". The poor include outsiders, women, the poor, the sick, social outcasts and religiously unclean.

Jesus presents himself as an outsider—marginalized from the existing political and economic power structures in Palestine.

Luke shows Jesus' compassion towards the outsider frequently: Zacchaeus the tax collector, the prostitute in Simon's house who welcomed Jesus, or the dying thief on the cross next to Jesus.

Other outsiders in the Gospel include the woman with the issue of blood, lepers, gentiles, the shepherds at Jesus' birth and the teenage Mary chosen to bear Jesus as her son.

Only in Luke do we get parables that concentrate on the outsider giving or receiving mercy (the Prodigal Son, the Good Samaritan, and the Pharisee and the Tax Collector).

RADICAL HOSPITALITY

In Luke it seems as if Jesus is going to a meal, at a meal, or leaving a meal — and Jesus is seemingly always eating with unexpected people—the wrong people! A major Lukan theme emerges – Jesus welcomes all of us— outsiders, the non-religious, tax collectors, sinners and prostitutes to His table—as is!

MISSION

Luke 4:18-21 is The Nazareth Manifesto: Jesus' mission in his own words. (read this passage out loud! More than once! Seriously!) Jesus announcement of his mission is the defining moment – the guiding principle – for what Luke chooses to include in his Gospel.

SETTING

CROSSROADS

Palestine/Israel was the crossroads of Mediterranean culture and empires. Every nation with the desire to rule the Mediterranean world passed through Palestine—and enfolded Palestine into their kingdom. Israel had a long history of being the subject of an empire (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome). Israel longed for independence and a return to be their own Kingdom controlling their own destiny. Israel was waiting for a king to restore national pride and secure Israel's boundaries permanently – they waited for the "Messiah" to come. Could Jesus of Nazareth be the long awaited king to restore Israel's postponed destiny?

CULTURE

There was constant tension and struggle to maintain a focus on the "old time religion" and culture of Israel as they awaited their long-expected king. But Greek culture was pervasive and always threatening to be the dominant influence for the next generation. Greek culture was cool. If you wanted to get ahead in life—you were expected to embrace the Greek way of life. It was called "Hellenization." The guardians of "religion" felt it was their job to keep their way of life "pure" from outside influence – so they can be ready for their

King. It was a massive culture war with the highest stakes.

ROME

The empire that ruled Palestine and all of the Mediterranean world from north Africa to London was called Rome. Full of highly evolved, well thought out systems—along with the Roman armies—Rome provided the ability for peoples/cultures to interact in ways never seen before:

Rule of law: one government with the same structures and laws everywhere.
Pax Romana=Roman peace.

Commerce: a road system that connected the entire empire. (The internet of the 1st Century).

One common language for commerce: Greek.

JEWISH RESPONSES TO ROME

There were five dominant Jewish responses to Roman rule and Greek cultural influence:

SADDUCEES

Political collaborators with Rome. Highly influenced by Greek culture. Well to do financially. Often agnostic about God. The Jewish ruling class. Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead.

ESSENES Disgusted with Jewish culture and religious practices. Retreated from the cities and culture. Moved to the desert. Set up alternative religious customs and practices. Preserved the oldest copies we have of the Hebrew scriptures (Dead Sea Scrolls).

PHARISEES

Religious and devout. Rejected the Sadducees embracing of Greek culture.

Embraced the lifestyle and religion handed down via Hebrew scriptures. Respected by the common people. Protected the holiness of Old Testament law by passionately creating guard rails of additional rules to be followed by all.

ZEALOTS

Absolutely (and at times, violently) opposed to Rome and to any Jews who collaborated with the enemy. Focused most of their hatred on collaborators.

PEOPLE OF THE LAND

The working poor. Oppressed. Hungry. Sick. "Daily bread" was a daily prayer. The overwhelming majority.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

As you prepare to apprentice with Jesus while reading through Luke's gospel, here are a few recommended resources that you may want to utilize.

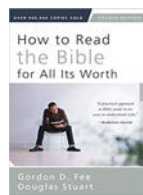
The Bible Project, Book Overview For Luke



Luke For Everyone, N.T. Wright



How To Read The Bible For All It's Worth, Gordon Fee & Douglas Stuart



SESSION 01



CHECK IN

If your group is just getting to know one another, here's an exercise designed to help you connect through story telling. You'll need three colors of sticky notes and something to write with for each person. If your group is already familiar with one another, take time to discuss the following question: What are you hoping for from this Jesus XP cohort experience?

01

Choose one color of sticky note, then write out, one per sticky note, all of the relationships, events and significant moments that have positively contributed to your life story. Once you think you've captured them all, take a moment to pause, and then write down any others that come to mind.

02

Chose a different color sticky note, then write out (again, one item per sticky note) the moments of pain or struggle that have also contributed to your life story. (Again, as in step 1, after you think you're done with this step, pause, and then write down anything else in this category that comes to mind.)

03

Next, arrange the sticky notes in chronological order.

04

Once all items are arranged in chronological order, take a moment to identify the natural "chapters" that you see and create a title for each.

05

Take 3-5 minutes to share your story.

BIBLE

Read Luke 1:1-38 together. What do you notice? What questions do these words lead you into?

THIS WEEK'S READING: LUKE 1-2

The first two chapters of Luke contain a prologue introduction, the stories of the birth of John (the Baptist) and Jesus, and some of the only text we have about Jesus's early years. Notice as you read who this "gospel" or good news is written to. Theophilus was possibly a real person – a benefactor of Paul and Luke's ministry. Theophilus could also be a generic name that means "one who God loves." Either way, Theophilus is a gentile name, which sets Luke's gospel out the gate as written to outsiders of the Jewish world. Luke spends a great deal of time discussing all that went into the birth of Jesus – and how people felt about it. He includes a teenage mother, shepherds (outcasts), angels, and even prophets to herald and celebrate the birth of Jesus. Who is this Jesus?

PRACTICE: DAILY RHYTHM

An intentional way to experience the day with Jesus and others.

SCRIPTURE BEFORE PHONE

How we start the day matters. Refusing to check the phone until after reading a passage of Scripture is a way of replacing the question "What do I need to do today?" with a better one, "Who is Jesus and how can I become more like him?" Daily immersion in the Scriptures resists the anxiety of emails, the anger of news, and the envy of social media. Instead, it forms us daily in our true identity as the beloved children of God.

SPEND THE DAY WITH JESUS

Prayer keeps us connected to Jesus all day. One way to experience that connection is through morning, midday and evening prayer. Morning prayer can be as simple as "Good morning Jesus, what do you want to do today? Midday prayer might consist of praying the prayer Jesus gave us, often called The Lord's Prayer, and during evening prayer you might want to engage the Examen practice. These and other prayer resources can be found at newlife.tv/dailyprayer.

NO PHONE WHILE WAITING

We are made for presence, but so often our phones are the cause of our absence. To be two places at a time is to be no place at all. Choosing to be present with ourselves, others and God's good creation is an act of love. What unexpected moment might you encounter today as you wait with awareness?

MEANINGFUL CONNECTION WITH OTHERS

The habit of connecting with someone during a shared meal, coffee or conversation each day helps us orient our schedules and lives towards a posture of hospitality - which Jesus regularly embodies and extends to us in every moment. Who are you getting together with today?

\$10

SESSION 02

**GOOD
NEWS
IS COMING**

CHECK IN

What did you sense Jesus inviting you into as you read Luke 1-2 and practiced the daily rhythm?

BIBLE

Read Luke 3:1-20 together. As part of this time, consider reading Luke 3:1-6 as a Lectio Divina exercise.

THIS WEEK'S READING: LUKE 3-5

These chapters jump ahead to the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius. Luke names the high priest, the governor and "rulers" of the regions. Luke is giving a subtle hint to the social and political setting of the coming events. Like Mark and Matthew, Luke includes the "preparing" way of John the Baptist, including some of his teaching. All of this prepares the landscape for Jesus to "begin his public ministry". Luke includes a genealogy in the middle of the story. Notice how in Luke's genealogy, Jesus's lineage is traced back not to a Jewish leader or hero, but to God. Jesus' temptation is followed by his proclamation of his mission. Read Luke 4:18-19 out loud – this is Jesus' mission . . . for everyone . . . and he is rejected for it. The stories to follow in this section will show how Jesus will fulfill his mission of being "good news to the poor". The "poor" here is describing anyone in low status financially, socially, or religiously. Jesus illustrates "who" he is for by the way he interacts in the coming verses.

PRACTICE: LECTIO DIVINA

Lectio Divina is an ancient spiritual practice focused on prayerfully engaging the biblical text and encountering Jesus, the Living Word, through it. The term is derived from Latin words meaning reading (lectio) and divine (divina).

PRACTICING LECTIO DIVINA

Luke 4:14-21

FIRST READING (HEAD)

Slowly read the passage of Scripture that you have selected. As you do so, pay attention to any word, phrase, or idea that catches your attention. Then, pause for a moment, keeping that word, phrase, or idea in view.

What did you notice?

SECOND READING (HEART)

Read the passage again, and then pause to dwell on the word, phrase, or idea that captured your attention. What thoughts come to mind as you meditate on the word, phrase, or idea? What do you feel? What does the word, phrase or idea have to say to your current reality? What might

God be inviting you into through it?

THIRD READING (HANDS)

Read the passage once more and begin to converse with God about what you have encountered. Tell God the word, phrase, or idea that captured your attention and what came to mind as you meditated upon it. Listen for how God might be using the word, phrase, or idea to bless and form you. Finally, pay attention to how God might be directing you to respond to what you've encountered during this experience. What is Jesus saying to you, and what are you going to do about it?

A large, diverse crowd of people is gathered outdoors, likely at a festival or concert. The people are seen from the back or side, looking towards the right. The background shows a building with a sign that is partially visible and out of focus. The text "SESSION 03" is overlaid in the center of the image in a white, sans-serif font.

SESSION 03

CHECK IN

What did you sense Jesus inviting you into as you read Luke 3-5 and practiced Lectio Divina?

BIBLE

Read Luke 6:1-11 together. As part of this time, consider reading John 6:1-5 as a Lectio Divina exercise.

THIS WEEK'S READING: LUKE 6-7

Jesus takes on the Sabbath in the first part of chapter 6. You'll see Jesus break "Jewish rules" for the sake of compassion for both insiders and outsiders as a theme in Luke. Jesus calls 12 disciples . . . apprentices . . . leaders (Luke calls them apostles) to help him fulfill his mission. Luke's version of the sermon on the mount, which is sometimes called the sermon on the plain follows in this section. Jesus is teaching his disciples the core tenets of what it means to follow him. In chapter 7, Jesus attributes faith to a Roman officer, which would have enraged most of his Jewish friends. He raises the dead, talks with and about John the Baptist, and finds himself at a dinner that doesn't at all go the way his host had planned. Jesus is drawing lines of faith, acceptance, and belief in ways no one expects.

PRACTICE: SABBATH

Sabbath is blessed by God and is one day out of seven each week that is set aside for rest, worship and renewal (Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11; Deuteronomy 5:12-15).

ONE WAY TO PRACTICE SABBATH READ & CONSIDER

Read Genesis 2:1-3, Exodus 20:8-11, Deuteronomy 5:12-15 and Mark 2:23-28. Notice that God is the first to practice sabbath keeping, to rest, and consider what implication that might have for you. Also, spend some time pondering Jesus' statement in Mark 2:27: "The Sabbath was made for the needs of human beings, and not the other way around."

PLAN FOR 3 BACK TO BACK TO BACK BLOCKS

Jesus and those who came before him in Hebrew faith and culture would observe Sabbath from sundown on Friday until sundown on Saturday. A twenty four hour period of rest, worship, delight and community. Below you will find a grid with 3 blocks for each day. A morning block, afternoon block and evening block. What 3 back to back to back blocks will you set as a time of worshipful rest and renewal? (Jesus' would have been the Friday evening block, the Saturday morning block and the Saturday afternoon block.)

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA

HELPFUL QUESTIONS WHEN THINKING OF HOW TO SPEND A SABBATH DAY

What is restful for me? How do I most freely connect with God?

SESSION 04



CHECK IN

What did you sense Jesus inviting you into as you read Luke 6-7 and practiced Sabbath keeping?

BIBLE

Read Luke 8:1-25 together. As part of this time, consider reading John 8:22-25 as a Lectio Divina exercise.

THIS WEEK'S READING: LUKE 8-10

People tend to get tripped up on deciding who can and who can't follow Jesus. In Jesus's day, the questions were different (who is righteous/clean/acceptable) but the heart was the same. In Luke 8-10, Jesus flips the script on who is in. He's been kind and compassionate to outsiders, but in these chapters, he is radically inclusive . . . even celebratory . . . of women, gentiles, the unclean, the fearful, the hungry, and ultimately—the enemy. Notice how not just the marginalized are noticing Jesus's strange way – even Herod is perplexed. Jesus's own disciples are trying to figure out what to do with him, and Peter makes his declaration that Jesus is the Messiah – the saving one. There is a wild scene on a mountain top that convinces Peter, James, and John that Jesus really is from God, and then Jesus starts his journey to Jerusalem. Along the way, Jesus sends disciples on missions and talks about what truly matters – how you love people. He uses a story about “a despised Samaritan” – the worst kind of person to a Jewish listener – to get to the heart of love in the Kingdom Jesus is building. In the Kingdom of God, your enemy may be who God uses to save your life and show you the compassion of God. Jesus spoke of the cost of discipleship earlier in these chapters – he illustrates it with this story and says, “Go and do the same”.

PRACTICE: EXAMEN PRAYER

This prayer practice was developed by Ignatius of Loyola (1491 – 1556) and is focused on being attentive to and interacting with God’s loving presence in the midst of daily life. Followers of Jesus might pray this prayer at the end of a day or at a time of transition.

LIGHT

The Examen is a way to create space in which to carry on a conversation with God. Begin by asking the One who is “is pure light, undimmed by darkness of any kind” (1 John 1:5) to grant you the ability to clearly see, hear, understand, and respond to his loving presence.

THANKS

As moments of grace come to mind, give thanks for the good that has come to you today through God’s generosity. As Ignatius said, “I will ponder with great affection how much God has done for me, and how much He has given me of what He possesses, and finally, how much ... the same Lord desires to give Himself to me.”

REVIEW

Watch the day play back before you as if you were watching a movie. When did you feel you were cooperating most fully with God? When were you resisting?

RESPOND

After reviewing, take time to converse with God, expressing your thoughts on the actions, attitudes, feelings, and interactions you saw. You may want to seek forgiveness, ask for direction, express gratitude, or resolve to make a change and move forward.

NEXT

Look toward tomorrow. Ask God to be present in your thoughts, actions, and relationships.

SESSION 05



CHECK IN

What did you sense Jesus inviting you into as you read Luke 8-10 and practiced the Prayer of Examen?

BIBLE

Read Luke 11:1-28 together. As part of this time, consider reading John 11:1-4 as a Lectio Divina exercise.

THIS WEEK'S READING: LUKE 11-15

There is a lot to read this week, but it's worth getting into these teachings and parables. In the ten parables unique to Luke—these themes emerge: the poor and the marginalized, wealth and possessions, conflict and rejection, and Jesus coming for the lost, famously highlighted in the chapter fifteen.

Compassion for the other—centered in the understanding that Jesus shows compassion to me (who should have been other to him)—shifts everything about how people interact, pray, and understand the world around us. Notice how Jesus grieves for Jerusalem in chapter 13. Jesus wants all to experience his love and redemption, but he knows that those in places of power will struggle with the thing they need most to get there — humility. Using a series of stories about dinner parties, Jesus illustrates the kind of reckless love he is offering each of us —and asks that we offer others in return. Chapter 15 contains 3 famous “lost things” stories. What if we try reading these stories from the perspective of being the lost ones, not the owner of the thing that has been lost?

PRACTICE: PRAYER WALK

Jesus teaches his disciples to pray in Luke 11 (Also Matthew 6) and says “When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come...” Your kingdom come. That short phrase is packed with so much. In praying it we are saying “Father, may your good rule and reign, and the flourishing for everyone and everything that results from such come here.” And when we pray this, we are also giving ourselves over to being available for God to demonstrate what his good kingdom is like in tangible ways to those we encounter each day (Another biblical text that can be helpful for cultivating this mindset, imagination and way of life is Jeremiah 29:4-7, where God’s people are called to seek the shalom, the peace, the holistic well being of the place God has planted them.)

With that in mind, here’s a simple way to pray for God’s kingdom to come in your neighborhood, city, campus or anywhere else you spend our days.

1

Before heading out, take a moment to center yourself in “Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come...”

2

As you walk your neighborhood, city or campus simple pray for God’s kingdom to come in every house, business, school, etc. that you pass.

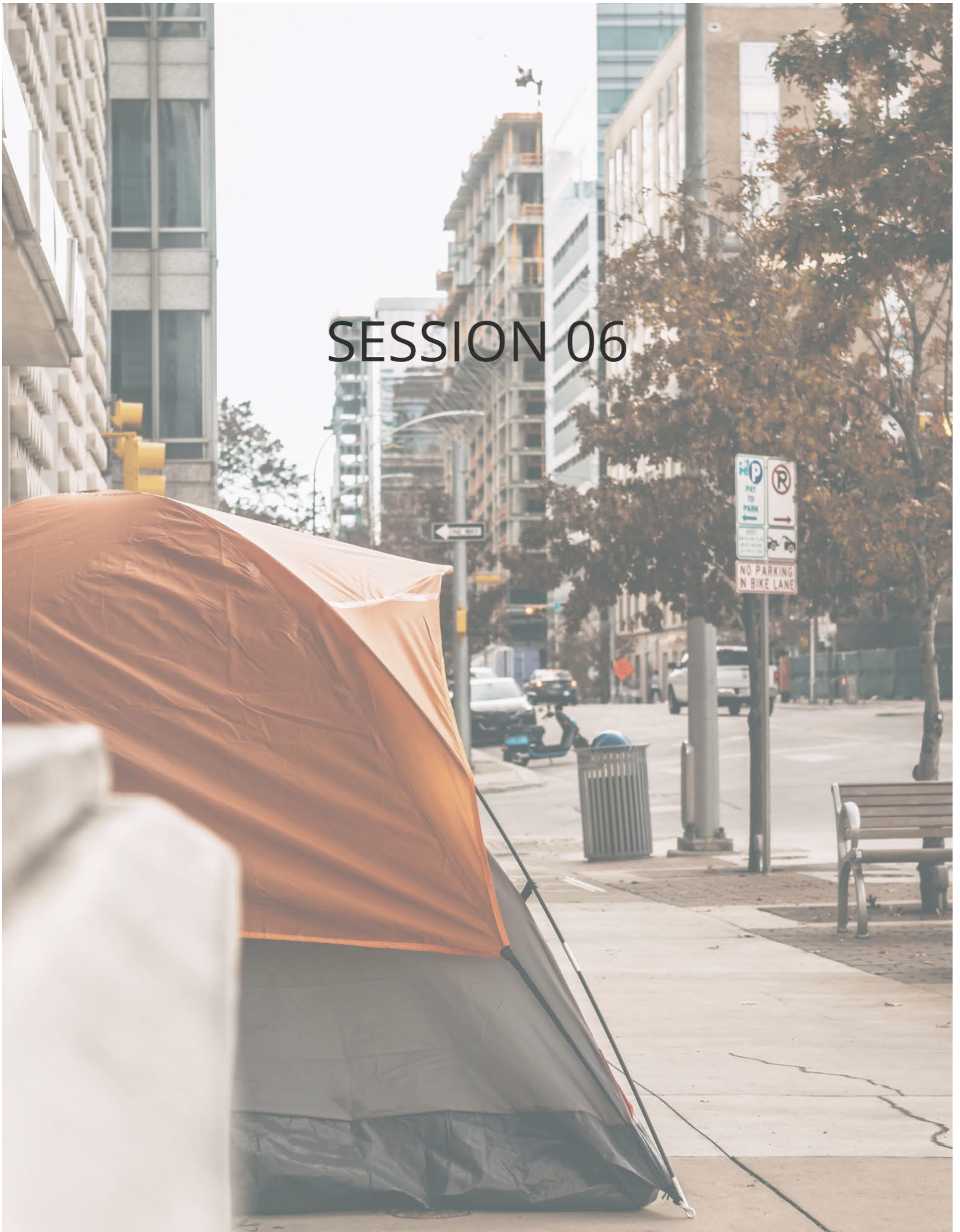
3

As you walk, listen, notice, and be available to those you pass. Whether it be a simple hello and smile, being available for someone’s question, commenting on something beautiful or good that you encounter or lending a hand to someone who needs it - be present and available.

4

Finally, become a regular. Lean into this practice over and over again - walk the same neighborhood, city, campus, etc., and see what connections and conversations develop.

SESSION 06



CHECK IN

What did you sense Jesus inviting you into as you read Luke 11-15 and leaned into the prayer walk practice?

BIBLE

Read Luke 16:1-15 together. As part of this time, consider reading Luke 16:13 as a Lectio Divina exercise.

THIS WEEK'S READING: LUKE 16-17

Jesus continues with parables centered on the rich and poor in chapter 16. In the middle, he tosses in a teaching on the law. The Law to a Pharisee was the way to see God and point others to God. There was a belief that "if everyone kept the Torah (the law) for one day, the Messiah would come." Jesus, who Luke tells us is the Messiah, is standing in front of them trying to get them to see God's heart of compassion behind the law. Jesus speaks about the Kingdom of God, faith, and forgiveness. Luke tells us the story of yet another outsider who is healed from Leprosy—made clean and acceptable to his community by Jesus. One of 10 who are healed comes back praising him. Next to his gratefulness and faith, the religious leaders continue to question Jesus about what the kingdom looks like. Luke seems to do this often – have the Pharisees ask a question and then have Jesus do something that answers in deed, not word. As if the outsider, Luke, is asking the insiders, "Can't you see what is happening?"

PRACTICE: GRATITUDE, CONTENTMENT & GENEROSITY SURVEY

Take time to consider what you have and choose the option that best describes each area below: lacking (LA), adequate (AD), abundant (AB), luxurious (LU). Then, assess your contentment in each area. Finally, consider the questions to the right that relate to generosity.

Food LA AD AB LU
Satisfaction: Yes No

What did this exercise stir up within you?

Clothing LA AD AB LU
Satisfaction: Yes No

What is the relationship between what you have and your default posture and practice when it comes to generosity?

Shelter LA AD AB LU
Satisfaction: Yes No

Transportation LA AD AB LU
Satisfaction: Yes No

What might Jesus be inviting you into as it relates to your relationship with money and possessions, and the way of generosity?

Health Care LA AD AB LU
Satisfaction: Yes No

Education LA AD AB LU
Satisfaction: Yes No



SESSION 07

CHECK IN

What did you sense Jesus inviting you into as you read Luke 16-17 and leaned into the gratitude, contentment and generosity survey?

BIBLE

Read Luke 18:1-43 together. As part of this time, consider reading Luke 18:35-43 as a Lectio Divina exercise.

THIS WEEK'S READING: LUKE 18

Jesus dives deep into teaching about the heart of a disciple in this chapter. Luke relays some parables Jesus tells which elevate the faith and deeds of those rejected by society in opposition to the religious leadership who SHOULD be righteous. Jesus is, over and over again, trying to make the point that standing, wealth, birth, age, ability, or health does not keep anyone from the kingdom of God. It is the compassion of God that makes a way for all people to join Jesus in his Kingdom. "Who in the world can be saved," they asked. To this question, notice the response of the blind beggar Luke introduces us to . . . "Lord, he said, "I want to see!" And Jesus said, "All right, receive your sight. Your faith has healed you."

PRACTICE: WHAT DO YOU WANT (A SIMPLE PRACTICE FOR PROCESSING DESIRE WITH JESUS)

In Luke 18:35-43 we read the following: "As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind beggar was sitting beside the road. When he heard the noise of a crowd going past, he asked what was happening. They told him that Jesus the Nazarene was going by. So he began shouting, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" "Be quiet!" the people in front yelled at him. But he only shouted louder, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" When Jesus heard him, he stopped and ordered that the man be brought to him. As the man came near, Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" "Lord," he said, "I want to see!" And Jesus said, "All right, receive your sight! Your faith has healed you." Instantly the man could see, and he followed Jesus, praising God. And all who saw it praised God, too."

Notice Jesus' question. "What do you want (me to do for you)?" Throughout the New Testament Gospels we find Jesus asking people this question, in a variety of ways.

This practice is designed to help you process your own desire with Jesus, who shows us that God is interested in engaging our desire, not ignoring or suppressing it.

1

Take a pack of index cards and a sharpie and find a comfortable place to sit and write.

2

Write down one thing you want on each card. Don't filter. Simply write. One item per card. And keep writing

3

When you think you've captured every desire, give some space for others to surface - get up and move, take a short walk, whatever, and then write some more.

4

Next, with the cards on the table, slowly read Luke 18:35-43 (above). Take time to envision Jesus approaching you, his commitment to being with and attending to you. Hear Jesus ask you, "What do you want me to do for you?"

5

With Jesus' invitation in your ears, begin to read back through your cards, and pay attention to any themes that begin to emerge. In fact, it might be helpful to stack the cards according to theme.

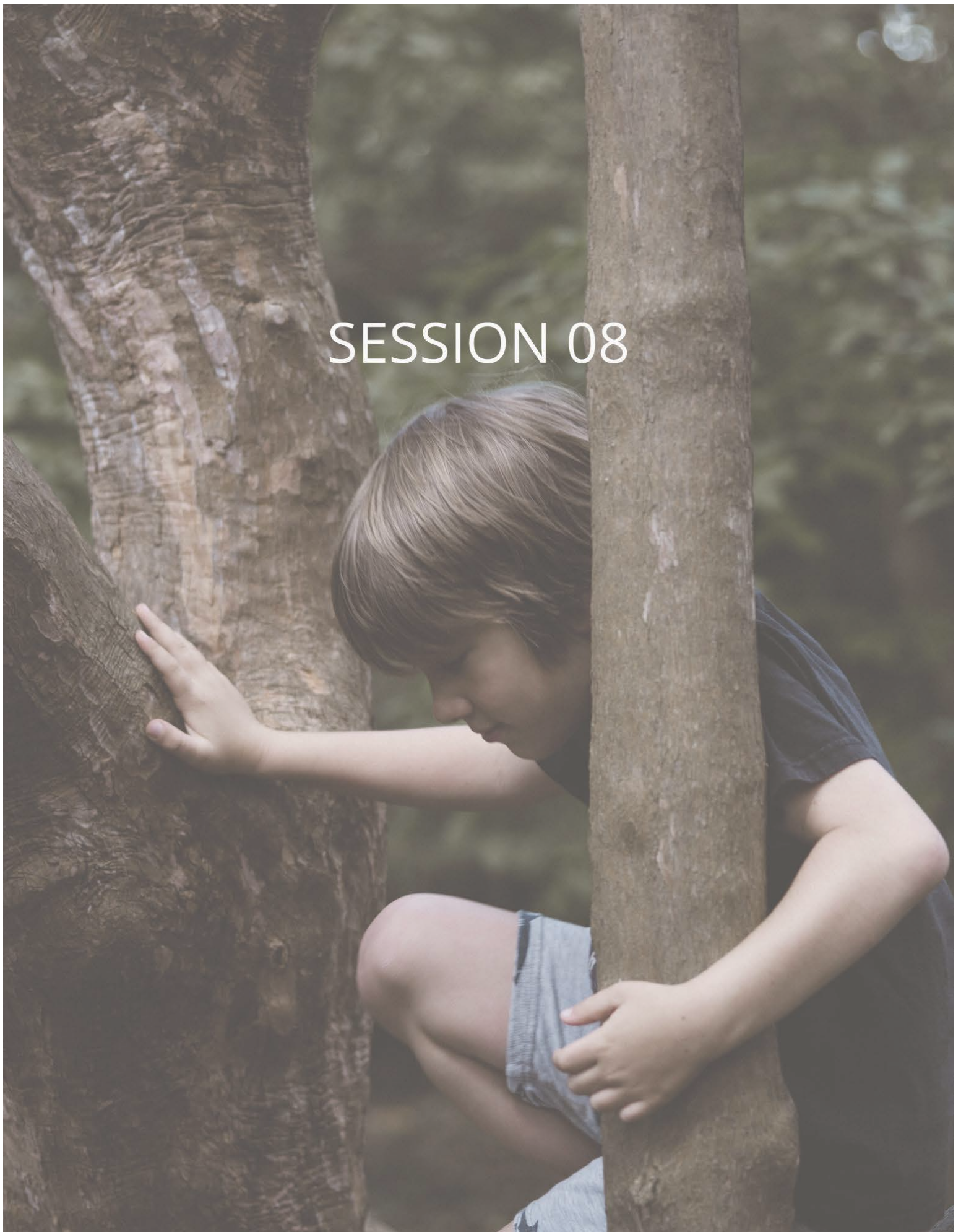
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Finally, pay attention to which of the cards, which theme, gets at what you really want - the desire beneath the desire, and voice that to Jesus, in response to his question. Then, simply sit in the moment, and hear him say "All right.."

7

Don't fret about how he'll bring the desire to fruition, or if it will look exactly like you think, but accept his goodness and commitment to your flourishing, and give thanks.

SESSION 08



CHECK IN

What did you sense Jesus inviting you into as you read Luke 18 and leaned into the “What do you want?” practice?

BIBLE

Read Luke 19:1-10 together. As part of this time, consider reading Luke 19:1-5 as a Lectio Divina exercise.

THIS WEEK’S READING: LUKE 19

Chapter 19 introduces the reader to Zacchaeus, whose story is a deep dive into how Jesus intends to interact with everyone – and the response that we have to Jesus’s undeserved compassion and invitation to a new way. What do we do with the compassion and love that Jesus offers in his new kingdom? Jesus tells a parable to describe his hope: That we would invest it and share it with others. This is the story Luke uses to lead into Jesus’s “Triumphal” or “Messianic” entry into Jerusalem. Again from a heart of compassion (Jesus weeps over Jerusalem) Jesus puts on a display of his passion for protecting the marginalized and overturning religious control over people in the temple. This act was dramatic and became fuel for those in power to plot his death.

PRACTICE: LAMENT FOR THE BROKENNESS WE ENCOUNTER

In Luke 19:41-42 we hear these words: "But as he came closer to Jerusalem and saw the city ahead, he began to weep. 'How I wish today that you of all people would understand the way to peace...'" In this scene, Jesus laments over the lack of peace, shalom, the way things ought to be, and the pain and consequence that brings upon the people of the city.

1

At least once this week, take time to consider the following. Write down your observations.

If Jesus were to look over your city, what might cause him to lament?

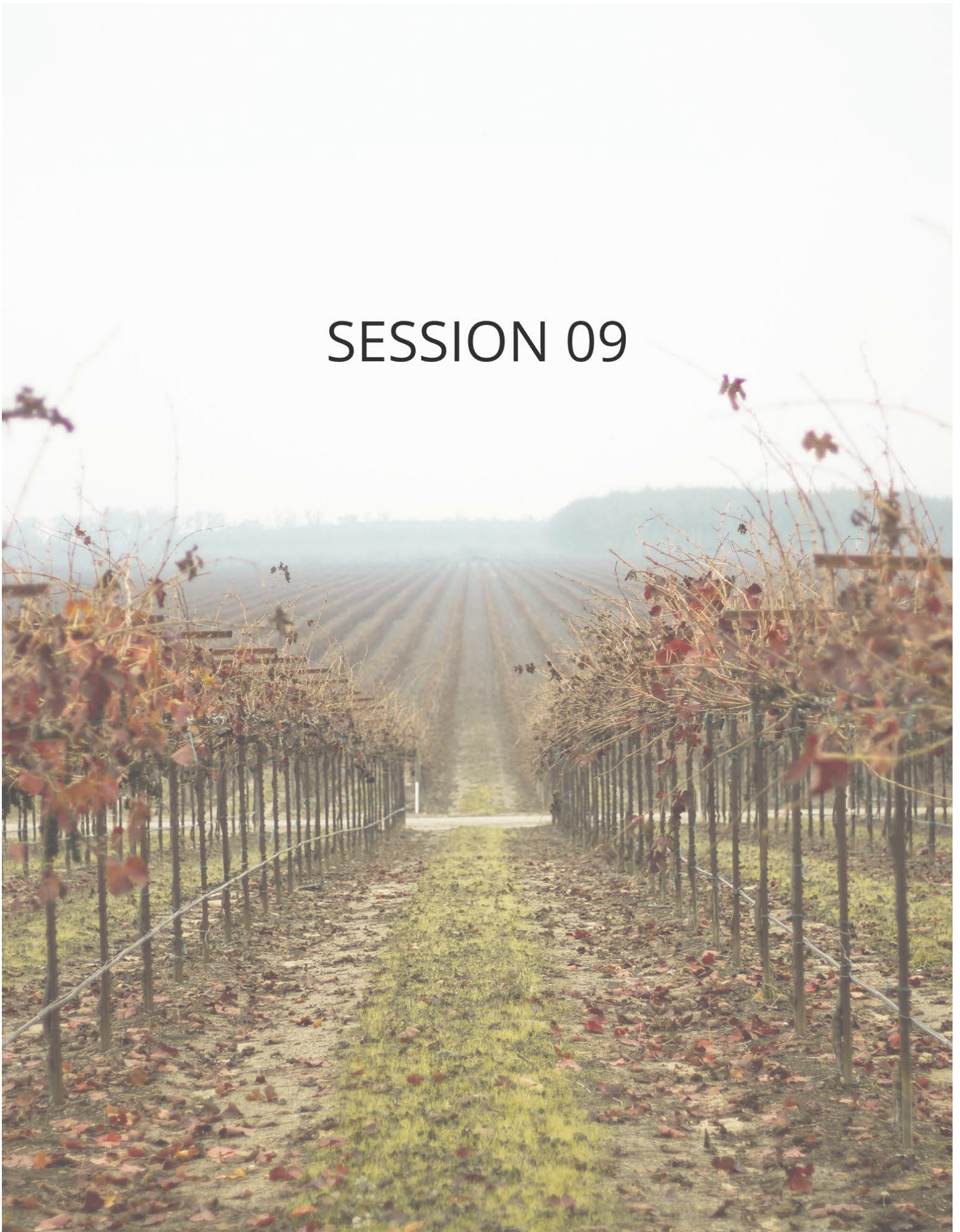
What do you hear as you go about your day? Are the words and messages you encounter - both personally, as well as those you hear being addressed to others - providing help and hope, or are they harmful?

What do you notice about how people are treated as you go through your day? Are dignity, respect and equity offered equally to all?

2

After capturing your responses, write out your own words of compassionate lament for the brokenness that needs to be made right in your city. Consider how Jesus might be inviting you to be part of the transformation that's needed.

SESSION 09



CHECK IN

What did you sense Jesus inviting you into as you read Luke 19 and leaned into the lament practice that you engaged?

BIBLE

Read Luke 20:1-40 together. As part of this time, consider reading Luke 20:20-25 as a Lectio Divina exercise.

THIS WEEK'S READING: LUKE 20-21

The narrative is now centered on Jesus publicly engaging with people in Jerusalem. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus spent most of his days teaching in the countryside (Galilee, Capernaum, even Bethany), but now, he is teaching in the temple. Recall Jesus's early days teaching in the temple and how all who heard him were astonished. Now, those who heard him were trying to trap him into some anti-Roman or anti-Torah sentiment that would be grounds for his arrest. Jesus is masterful as he discusses authority, taxes, resurrection – to the point that “no one asked him any more questions.” Luke continues to highlight moments that religious leaders are called out by Jesus followed by placing those exchanges next to stories of outsiders or the marginalized being celebrated. The Widow and her offering are an example of this. Jesus then makes what could easily be seen as a threat against the temple and calls his disciples to be ready for what the kingdom really looks like – watch for the seasons, understand the signs. It's as if he is saying, “I've been showing you all this time, don't miss it. His urgency is building, and it makes sense, because his days are drawing short.

PRACTICE: THE IDEA AUDIT

1

IDENTIFY WHERE YOUR IDEAS COME FROM

Take a few minutes to think about where your ideas about yourself, others and the world come from. This can be social media, movies, shows, music, art, friends, books, podcasts, or something else. Write down 3-5 sources of ideas in your life, beginning with the most influential. (Hint: If you're not sure which sources are most influential, begin with the sources that consume the most time, that evoke the most emotion, or to which your mind travels most when you're distracted.)

2

NAME YOUR IDEAS

Choose an idea source (1 of the 3-5 that you wrote down in step 1) that you think is the most influential in your life. Then brainstorm, and write down, all of the ideas that you have received from that source.

Examples:

In the most recent episode of _____, the message behind the story was _____.

As I've scrolled through my Instagram feed lately, I've found myself feeling like _____.

3

REVIEW YOUR IDEAS

Review the list of ideas that you wrote down in step 2, and ask yourself: How does this idea align with the Jesus way (which we've discovered during our time in the Gospel of Luke), and what is it producing in me?

SESSION 10



CHECK IN

What did you sense Jesus inviting you into as you read Luke 20-21 and leaned into the idea audit that you engaged?

BIBLE

Read Luke 22:1-53 together. As part of this time, consider reading Luke 22:24-27 as a Lectio Divina exercise.

THIS WEEK'S READING: LUKE 22-24

Luke's account of Jesus's Last Supper, Peter's denial, Judas's betrayal, Jesus's trial and crucifixion, his burial and his resurrection are all found in these final chapters of Luke. Still, Luke is calling out unlikely interactions. Jesus's conversation with a thief crucified beside him is a picture of the invitation Jesus offers in his death. In chapter 24, the most unlikely of witnesses, women are invited by the angels to bring the story of Jesus's resurrection back to the disciples. There is an interaction that will remind you of a time when Jesus healed a blind beggar in chapter 24. Two followers of Jesus were walking on a road. They didn't recognize Jesus. They talked about him and asked questions about what it all meant. They were missing him – right in front of them. Then, "Suddenly, their eyes were opened" and they saw that Jesus was with them. Jesus then appears to his disciples and ascends to heaven, telling them to wait for the Holy Spirit. Luke continues his story in the book of Acts which shows many more opportunities for believers' eyes to be opened to Jesus who is with them by his Spirit, bringing his Kingdom . . . Good news to the poor.

PRACTICE: COMMUNION

Just before his sacrificial death, Jesus shared a meal, commonly referred to as The Last Supper, with his disciples (Matthew 26:17-30, Mark 14:12-26, Luke 22:7-39). During their time at the table the following took place: "He took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' After supper he took another cup of wine and said, 'This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you.'" (Luke 22:19-20)

Communion is a practice that emerges from this scene and that helps us remember Jesus' sacrificial death and resurrection. Jesus' great act of love roots us in a reconciled and never ending relationship with God, the one who loves us completely.

Communion is also a practice that we are invited to participate in regularly, for Jesus says "Do this in remembrance of me." While we participate in communion as part of our gathering together with the church, we are also free to participate and remember in the midst of daily life.

So as we find ourselves around tables - at home, at school, at work, at the cafes and restaurants we frequent, or anywhere else . . . Gather something to eat (bread, cookie, cracker, etc.) and something to drink (whatever you prefer). As you eat and drink, remember this: The body of Christ has been given, broken for us and the entire world. The blood of Christ has been poured out, shed for us and the entire world.



CORE PRACTICES

LECTIO DIVINA

Lectio Divina is an ancient spiritual practice focused on prayerfully engaging the biblical text and encountering Jesus, the Living Word, through it. The term is derived from Latin words meaning reading (lectio) and divine (divina).

PRACTICING LECTIO DIVINA

FIRST READING (HEAD)

Slowly read the passage of Scripture that you have selected. As you do so, pay attention to any word, phrase, or idea that catches your attention. Then, pause for a moment, keeping that word, phrase, or idea in view.

What did you notice?

SECOND READING (HEART)

Read the passage again, and then pause to dwell on the word, phrase, or idea that captured your attention. What thoughts come to mind as you meditate on the word, phrase, or idea? What do you feel? What does the word, phrase or idea have to say to your current reality? What might

God be inviting you into through it?

THIRD READING (HANDS)

Read the passage once more and begin to converse with God about what you have encountered. Tell God the word, phrase, or idea that captured your attention and what came to mind as you meditated upon it. Listen for how God might be using the word, phrase, or idea to bless and form you. Finally, pay attention to how God might be directing you to respond to what you've encountered during this experience. What is Jesus saying to you, and

what are you going to do about it?

DAILY RHYTHM

SCRIPTURE BEFORE PHONE

How we start the day matters. Refusing to check the phone until after reading a passage of Scripture is a way of replacing the question "What do I need to do today?" with a better one, "Who is Jesus and how can I become more like him?" Daily immersion in the Scriptures resists the anxiety of emails, the anger of news, and the envy of social media. Instead, it forms us daily in our true identity as the beloved children of God.

SPEND THE DAY WITH JESUS

Prayer keeps us connected to Jesus all day. One way to experience that connection is through morning, midday and evening prayer. Morning prayer can be as simple as "Good morning Jesus, what do you want to do today?" Midday prayer might consist of praying the prayer Jesus gave us, often called The Lord's Prayer, and during evening prayer you might want to engage the Examen practice. These and other prayer resources can be found at newlife.tv/dailyprayer.

NO PHONE WHILE WAITING

We are made for presence, but so often our phones are the cause of our absence. To be two places at a time is to be no place at all. Choosing to be present with ourselves, others and God's good creation is an act of love. What unexpected moment might you encounter today as you wait with awareness?

MEANINGFUL CONNECTION WITH OTHERS

The habit of connecting with someone during a shared meal, coffee or conversation each day helps us orient our schedules and lives towards a posture of hospitality - which Jesus regularly embodies and extends to us in every moment. Who are you getting together with today?

EXAMEN PRAYER

This prayer practice was developed by Ignatius of Loyola (1491 – 1556) and is focused on being attentive to and interacting with God's loving presence in the midst of daily life. Followers of Jesus might pray this prayer at the end of a day or at a time of transition.

LIGHT

The Examen is a way to create space in which to carry on a conversation with God. Begin by asking the One who is "is pure light, undimmed by darkness of any kind" (1 John 1:5) to grant you the ability to clearly see, hear, understand, and respond to his loving presence.

THANKS

As moments of grace come to mind, give thanks for the good that has come to you today through God's generosity. As Ignatius said, "I will ponder with great affection how much God has done for me, and how much He has given me of what He possesses, and finally, how much ... the same Lord desires to give Himself to me."

REVIEW

Watch the day play back before you as if you were watching a movie. When did you feel you were cooperating most fully with God? When were you resisting?

RESPOND

After reviewing, take time to converse with God, expressing your thoughts on the actions, attitudes, feelings, and interactions you saw. You may want to seek forgiveness, ask for direction, express gratitude, or resolve to make a change and move forward.

NEXT

Look toward tomorrow. Ask God to be present in your thoughts, actions, and relationships.

COMMUNION

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