



ESSENTIALS

BUILDING FAITH FOR EVERYDAY LIFE

By Holly Furtick
with Eric Stanford

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO

Essentials

© 2021 by Holly Furtick with Eric Stanford

Published by Elevation Church
11416 E. Independence Blvd., Suite N
Matthews, NC 28105

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, scanning, or other—except for brief quotations in critical reviews or articles, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

Scriptures marked *esv* are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®). Copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked *TPT* are from The Passion Translation®. Copyright © 2017, 2018, 2020 by Passion & Fire Ministries, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. ThePassionTranslation.com.

ISBN 978-1-7377604-0-5

www.EssentialsStudy.com

ESSENTIALS

BUILDING FAITH FOR EVERYDAY LIFE

By Holly Furtick
with Eric Stanford

Study Book

I.



II.



III.



IV.



V.



VI.



A Note from Holly	P.08
How to Use This Book	P.10
Week I: Introduction	P.14
Week II: Praying	P.36
Week III: Worshiping	P.60
Week IV: Hearing	P.80
Week V: Giving	P.100
Week VI: Conclusion	P.122

A NOTE FROM HOLLY

One of the many things Steven and I have been grateful to God for since the start of Elevation in 2006 is how diverse our church has become. We are a group of people God has brought together from different religious backgrounds, different cultures, and different ages. We are men and women, teens and children, who are at different stages in our journey of faith. We worship in different locations and use our range of God-given gifts to serve Him in different neighborhoods and communities. With online worshipers, Elevation Church reaches across the nation and around the world. This is absolutely beautiful to me! And it says so much about the kind of God we serve!

But as diverse as our church is, we are all united around one center: Christ and His gospel. We are a family, a single body with many parts, as the apostle Paul put it (1 Corinthians 12:12–13), and we have a mission to see people far from God raised to life in Christ.

As our church continues to grow in number, I want our unity to be stronger than ever. And that's why I've created the *Essentials* Bible Study, inviting as many Elevators as possible to gather in groups

and go through this study together. I truly believe that when we come together, read scripture, and discuss what God is teaching us, we become even stronger in our faith and are able to have an even greater impact on the world around us.

This study is about focusing on the basic essentials of our faith. Jude 1:3 reminds us that we share in “the faith that was once for all entrusted to God’s holy people”—its unchanging truth. But as you’ll see in this study, our focus is not just on knowing about the faith. It’s not even about believing what we know. It’s about doing what we believe.

The proof is in the action. Elevation didn’t become a miracle church solely by teaching godly truth, as important as that is. We became a miracle church by taking steps of faith, led by the Spirit, and walking into the future boldly. And what’s true of the church as a whole is true for you, individually.

No matter what you look like, or where you come from, or what you’ve been through in your life up to this point, I invite you now to join me as we get back to the basics of being a Jesus follower. In this study, we are

going to remind ourselves of some of the essential practices of a believer in Christ, like prayer, worship, and how to hear God’s voice in our everyday lives. We’ll never graduate from the need for these practices, and we’ll never stop benefiting from them either. In fact, the more they’re ingrained in our nature, the more fruitful they’ll become.

So, it’s time to go back, dig deep, and do some of the simplest things in the Christian faith. It’s time to come together and discuss what we are learning so our faith can be deepened even more.

Hopefully, the fact that you are reading this little letter means you are in a group and ready to go. I want to ask you to commit to completing this study. I believe there is so much that God has to show you through the video teachings, weekly readings, and group discussions. I don’t want you to miss a thing. I believe God has so much He wants to speak to you personally over the next few weeks. Will you set aside the time to allow Him to do so?

Are you ready? I’m ready. Let’s go!

Holly Furtick



HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Essentials is a six-week video-based group study to help people build faith for everyday life. It focuses on essential faith practices that can be put into action every day to help you grow in your relationship with God.

If you have downloaded this book as a PDF, we recommend you print it off or use a blank journal so you have a designated place to write your answers and take notes. The following information will help you understand how the study flows.

NOTE PAGES

In your book is a page called “Video Teaching Notes” that you’ll use during your group meeting. While watching the weekly video with your group, jot down thoughts and notes on this page.

Holly will close each video teaching by giving your group a few questions to discuss with each other. These questions, along with space to write out your answers, are found on the “Video Teaching Notes” page.

If you miss a week or want to rewatch the videos, you can access them at EssentialsStudy.com (you may need to get a password from your group leader).

DAILY READINGS

Weeks one through five of the study include daily readings found in this book—four readings each week. After each group meeting, you’ll spend the next week completing those readings. You’ll come back to your group the following week to have a short discussion about the readings you did as well as start a new topic. (For example, after your week one group meeting, you’ll complete the week one readings in this book and come prepared to discuss them at your second group meeting.)

Each daily reading provides prompts designed for personal study and reflection arranged in six “R” steps:

Read: In your own Bible or Bible app, read the main passage.

Review: What do you observe about the passage? Ask yourself: *What are the key words and main ideas I can find in this passage?*

Relate: Consider some ways you think this passage could apply in today’s world. How is it relevant to you and to others you know? Look for timeless principles as well as connections to current events.

Respond: Decide if God might be calling you to an action step as a response to what you’ve discovered. In other words, what are you going to start doing, stop doing, or change in your life in reaction to what you’ve read?

Read More: Read supplementary scriptures and think about a time when God showed up in your life and taught you something related to this week’s topic.

Reflect: Write out a prayer to God reflecting on what He spoke to you.

WEEKLY SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Once a week, there’s a seventh “R”:

Recite: Use the weekly “Recite” page in your book to write down the week’s memory passage as a way to keep scripture in front of you and to hide God’s Word in your heart.

DEVOTIONALS

Throughout the study are devotional readings that go deeper into each weekly topic and are helpful in understanding and personalizing the passages. Included with each reading is a question to help you make the most of the passage and to reflect on what you read.

To find additional resources, visit EssentialsStudy.com, or email Studies@elevationchurch.org for more information.



BEING THE CHURCH

When I was a little girl, I learned in Sunday school that a church is not a building. A church is a group of people who gather together to worship God.

There are so many different kinds of churches. Churches can differ in the way they look and feel and even in the ways they interpret the Bible. The church I grew up in is so different from our church today. I wonder, if you were raised in church, what your church was like and how it is different from Elevation. If you didn't grow up in church, how is Elevation different from what you thought church would be like?

In the New Testament, the Greek word translated "church" is *ekklesia*, meaning "assembly" or "meeting." It simply

refers to a group of Christ followers who worship and serve together and are spiritually bonded.

When we read about churches in the New Testament, we should picture small groups of people meeting in homes. Some churches eventually became quite large, but it doesn't necessarily take a lot of people to make a church, because Jesus said, "Where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them" (Matthew 18:20).

In most cases, the earliest churches didn't have paid clergy or staff. Services were highly participatory. Most of them probably included the same kinds of elements that were followed in synagogue services—reading of scripture, teaching, praying,

and singing. As New Testament books were written, these began to be gathered and treated as scripture alongside the Hebrew scriptures (Old Testament). Many congregations sang psalms from the Old Testament, but the apostle Paul also encouraged them to sing new songs inspired by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18–20; Colossians 3:16). Different people offered their spiritual gifts, to the point that sometimes the services could be pretty lively (1 Corinthians 12; 14). They performed baptisms and practiced the Lord's Supper frequently.

Being a part of the early Church, of course, didn't mean only going to meetings. The early Christians ate meals together and shared with those who had needs. They endured persecution together.

Sometimes they saw God work signs and wonders, and it was glorious; other times they got mired in rivalries and conflicts, and it was miserable. They welcomed babies with joy and buried loved ones in the hope of resurrection.

A lot of this sounds very familiar, doesn't it?

Churches look different in different places and times, but the Lord is always the same. We never stop needing the essential practices for following Him, and we will always be blessed as we assemble as a body with Christ as our head. No attack and no cultural trend will ever destroy the Church. Trust this, because Jesus said, "I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it" (Matthew 16:18).

What similarities do you see between Elevation Church and the churches back in New Testament times? What differences do you see?

What is your personal church background?

How is going to church different from being a part of a church?



Week I.

INTRODUCTION

ESSENTIAL TRUTH:

We should build our lives on Jesus' teachings.



EVERYONE WHO COMES TO ME
AND HEARS MY WORDS AND
DOES THEM, I WILL SHOW
YOU WHAT HE IS LIKE:
HE IS LIKE A MAN BUILDING
A HOUSE, WHO DUG DEEP
AND LAID THE FOUNDATION
ON THE ROCK. AND WHEN
A FLOOD AROSE, THE STREAM
BROKE AGAINST THAT HOUSE
AND COULD NOT SHAKE IT,
BECAUSE IT HAD
BEEN WELL BUILT.

* LUKE 6: 47-48 ESV

LUKE 6:47—48 ESV

47 Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like:

48 he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built.

Video Teaching Notes

BIBLE PASSAGE: Luke 6:46–49 ESV

I.

In two minutes or less, tell about a group of people who have impacted your life and what led you to join this group.

II.

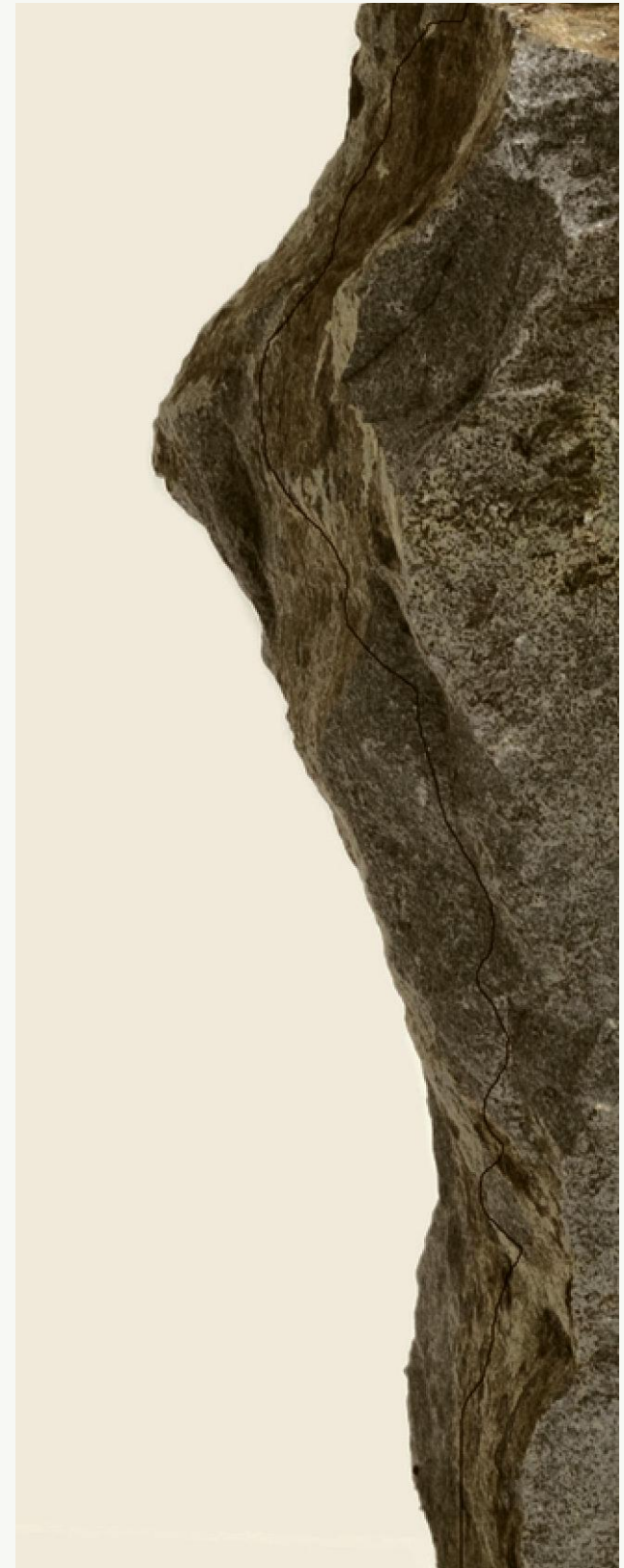
Holly shared how the history of Elevation Church is about a million little miracles. What is one miracle that you have experienced in your time at our church?

GET TO KNOW YOUR GROUP

Use the space below to write down the names and contact information of the members in your group.

NAME

CONTACT



WEEK ONE

Day One Established on Jesus' teachings

READ *Luke 6:46–49 ESV, “Like a man building a house, who dug down deep.”*

REVIEW *How does today’s passage relate to this week’s topic?*

RELATE *What are some ways you identify with this passage?*

RESPOND *What actions can you take today to live out this scripture?*

READ MORE

- *Joshua 1:7–8, Obedience = success*
- *1 Samuel 15:1–30, To obey is better than sacrifice*
- *Matthew 22:34–40, Commanded to love*

What is an example of a time when you obeyed God and understood later why that choice was for the best?

REFLECT *Write out a prayer to God. Use this space to thank Him and reflect on what He spoke to you.*



CHARACTER SKETCH OF A JESUS FOLLOWER

My father-in-law, Larry Furtick, came to Christ as an adult. In fact, my husband had the privilege of praying with his dad when he rededicated his life to Christ. As Larry began to grow in his faith, he fell in love with the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7), Jesus' most extended sermon in the Gospels and the most famous of His teachings. Larry decided that he was going to read the sermon every day. He did this for many years, and before he passed, he knew that passage of scripture like the back of his hand.

Larry was on to something. I think he somehow intuited that everything he needed to know about the essentials for following Christ were in those two chapters.

The story of the wise and foolish builders (our key passage for this week) concludes the Sermon on the Mount. The sermon is a summary of essential behaviors expected of those who follow Jesus. Hearing His words and putting them into action certainly includes *all* of His words in the Gospels, but we couldn't do any better than to be like Larry and start with the Sermon on the Mount.

So, what's in this sermon? If you have a moment this week, read through Jesus' sermon and use the overview below to help you understand it better. No mere summary can live up to the original, but here is an introduction to what the sermon says Jesus expects of us:

5:3–12

(The Beatitudes): Live like Jesus and you'll have joy!

5:13–16

(Salt and light): Your life should help others see God.

5:17–20

(Jesus as fulfillment of the Law): In faithfulness to Jesus, you will also be faithful to God's commands.

5:21–26

(You have heard, "You shall not murder"): Don't get mired in anger with people.

5:27–30

(You have heard, "You shall not commit adultery"): Don't commit any kind of sexual immorality.

5:31–32

(You have heard, "Anyone who divorces..."): Respect marriage.

5:33–37

(You have heard, "Do not break your oath"): Honor your commitments.

5:38–42

(You have heard, "Eye for eye"): Do not retaliate against evil.

5:43–48

(You have heard, "Love your neighbor"): Love your enemies.

6:1–4

(Giving to the needy): Be generous without drawing attention to yourself.

6:5–15

(A model prayer): Pray, not to impress others, but to foster your relationship with God.

6:16–18

(Fasting): As with giving and praying, fasting is something you should do, but it should be kept private.

6:19–24

(Treasures in heaven): Invest in things of eternal value.

6:25–34

(Do not worry): Trust that God will take care of your needs day by day.

7:1–6

(Do not judge): Examine yourself before you try to help others see God's way.

7:7–11

(Ask and it will be given to you): Make your requests to God freely, trusting that He is a loving and generous Father.

7:12

(The Golden Rule): Do to others what you would have them do to you.

7:13–14

(The narrow gate): Remember that the way to God is through Jesus alone, even though many others will choose an easier but hopeless alternative.

7:15–20

(False prophets): Demonstrate your faith through your actions.

7:21–23

(Not everyone who says, "Lord, Lord"): Be more concerned about your relationship with God than about doing impressive spiritual things.

7:24–27

(Wise and foolish builders): Build your life on Jesus' teachings.

Which part of Jesus' sermon challenges you the most?

You don't have to be like Larry and read the Sermon on the Mount every day. But what is a way you could absorb the sermon until it becomes a part of the operating system of your soul? (For example: Listen to it on your phone once a week? Identify key sections to memorize?)



I.II

WEEK ONE

Day Two

Doing what God says no matter how hard or crazy it may seem

READ

Judges 7, “A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!”

REVIEW

How does today’s passage relate to this week’s topic?

RELATE

What are some ways you identify with this passage?

RESPOND

What actions can you take today to live out this scripture?

READ MORE

- *Genesis 22:1–14, A different kind of sacrifice*
- *Judges 6, The prequel to the defeat of Midian*
- *Luke 1:26–38, A girl who submitted to the will of God*

What’s the hardest thing God has ever asked you to do?

REFLECT

Write out a prayer to God. Use this space to thank Him and reflect on what He spoke to you.

I.III

WEEK ONE

Day Three The perils of disobeying God

READ *Jonah 1, "It is my fault."*

REVIEW *How does today's passage relate to this week's topic?*

RELATE *What are some ways you identify with this passage?*

RESPOND *What actions can you take today to live out this scripture?*

READ MORE

- *Matthew 7:21–23, "I never knew you."*
- *Matthew 23:13–36, Woe to legalists who don't obey God!*

What kinds of trouble have you gotten yourself into by choosing to go your own way, apart from God?

REFLECT *Write out a prayer to God. Use this space to thank Him and reflect on what He spoke to you.*

I.IV

WEEK ONE

Day Four

Our motive for obeying Jesus: love

READ

John 14:15–24, “If you love me, keep my commands.”

REVIEW

How does today’s passage relate to this week’s topic?

RELATE

What are some ways you identify with this passage?

RESPOND

What actions can you take today to live out this scripture?

READ MORE

- *John 15:9–17, Remaining in Jesus’s love*
- *1 John 2:3–6 and 5:2–5, Knowing and obeying*

Why do you think Jesus insisted that love (rather than fear, duty, self-interest, or any other option) should be our motivation for doing what He has commanded?

REFLECT

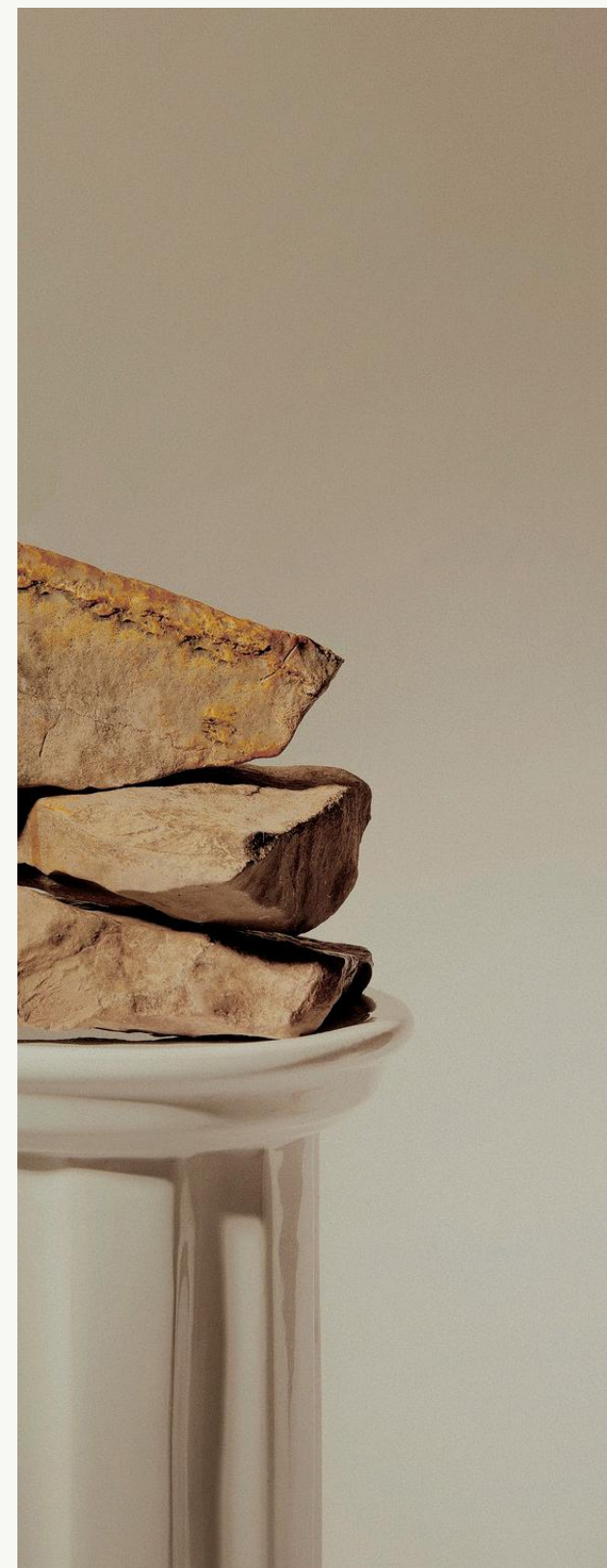
Write out a prayer to God. Use this space to thank Him and reflect on what He spoke to you.

RECITE

Write out this week's memory passage, Luke 6:47–48, and spend some time committing it to memory.

LUKE 6:47—48 ESV

47 Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like:
48 he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built.





Week II.

PRAYING

ESSENTIAL TRUTH:

Prayer is an ongoing conversation with God. When we have a relationship with God, we can talk to Him about everything.



DO NOT BE
 ANXIOUS ABOUT ANYTHING,
 BUT IN EVERY SITUATION,
 BY PRAYER & PETITION,
 WITH THANKSGIVING PRESENT
 YOUR REQUESTS TO GOD
 AND THE PEACE OF GOD,
 WHICH TRANSCENDS ALL
 UNDERSTANDING WILL GUARD
 YOUR HEARTS AND YOUR
 MINDS IN CHRIST
 JESUS.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7 ^{NIV} →

PHILIPPIANS 4:6—7

6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. **7** And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Video Teaching Notes

BIBLE PASSAGE: Philippians 4:4-9

I.

Tell about a time when God did not answer your prayer the way you thought He would. How was your faith in Him deepened through that process?

II.

Share about a time when you experienced the direct connection between peace and prayer.

PSALM 5:3 TPT

At each and every sunrise you will hear my voice as I prepare my sacrifice of prayer to you. Every morning I lay out the pieces of my life on the altar and wait for your fire to fall upon my heart.

Write down three things that are heavy on your heart today, and visualize yourself handing them to God.

- I.
- II.
- III.

PSALM 77:11—12 TPT

Yet I could never forget all your miracles, my God, as I remember all your wonders of old. I ponder all you've done, LORD, musing on all your miracles.

List three times in your past that the Lord made a way for you (for example: a healing, a new job, an answered prayer).

- I.
- II.
- III.

PSALM 100:4 TPT

You can pass through his open gates with the password of praise. Come right into his presence with thanksgiving. Come bring your thank offering to him and affectionately bless his beautiful name!

List three small, specific things you are grateful for.

- I.
- II.
- III.

PSALM 91:15 TPT

I will answer your cry for help every time you pray, and you will feel my presence in your time of trouble. I will deliver you and bring you honor.

PSALM 103:18—21 TPT

You are faithful to all those who follow your ways and keep your word. Yahweh has established his throne in heaven; his kingdom rules the entire universe. So bless the LORD, all his messengers of power, for you are his mighty heroes who listen intently to the voice of his word to do it. Bless and praise the LORD, you mighty warriors, ministers who serve him well and fulfill his desires.

Breathe in and out, taking a moment to be mindful of the peace and presence of God. List three things that really matter right now.

- I.
- II.
- III.

II.I

WEEK TWO

Day One

Praying about everything, all the time

READ

Philippians 4:4–9, “Present your requests to God.”

REVIEW

How does today’s passage relate to this week’s topic?

RELATE

What are some ways you identify with this passage?

RESPOND

What actions can you take today to live out this scripture?

READ MORE

- *Ephesians 6:18; Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18, More of Paul’s calls to continual prayer*
- *Luke 6:12–16, Jesus praying all night*

What’s standing in the way of you making prayer into a lifestyle instead of a special event?

REFLECT

Write out a prayer to God. Use this space to thank Him and reflect on what He spoke to you.



THE ACTS WAY OF PRAYING

There are no perfect formulas to prayer, but the Bible does describe different types of prayer that help us approach God with mindfulness. The ACTS method—standing for Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication—is a way to focus our conversations with our almighty God, who has promised to hear our thoughts before we even form them into prayers (Psalm 139).

Adoration. We start with adoration by acknowledging God's power and might. You may say something like "Heavenly Father, You are the Alpha and the Omega. You know all and You control all. There is no other god before You."

Confession. We take time to acknowledge our sin and the truth that we need a savior. We ask God to reveal to us any behaviors or attitudes that may be placing an obstacle between us and Him.

Thanksgiving. We celebrate our great God's love for us—a love He offered before we even knew Him, a love that cannot be swayed or influenced. We take time to reflect on the things in life we are grateful for.

Supplication. Finally, we tell God our heart's desires. If we need healing, if we need peace, if we need protection, we place our needs and wants at the foot of the cross and trust God to answer in the way that is for the best.

I love this method because it helps me remember that there is so much more to prayer than just coming to God with my needs and desires. It allows me to open up a conversation with God and reminds me of this: I am coming before so much more than just a mysterious force that makes my wishes come true. He is the God of the universe, who longs to have a relationship with me.

Let's put this into practice! Write out a prayer using the ACTS method.

ADORATION:

CONFESSION:

THANKSGIVING:

SUPPLICATION:

II.II

WEEK TWO

Day Two

Answers to prayer

READ

Luke 11:1–13, “How much more will your Father in heaven give!”

REVIEW

How does today’s passage relate to this week’s topic?

RELATE

What are some ways you identify with this passage?

RESPOND

What actions can you take today to live out this scripture?

READ MORE

- *Joshua 10:1–14, Joshua prays for the sun to stand still*
- *Matthew 6:5–8, Pray discreetly and receive your reward*
- *Mark 11:24–25, Believing before receiving*
- *John 16:23–24, Ask and you will receive*

What is the most amazing answer to prayer you’ve ever received?

REFLECT

Write out a prayer to God. Use this space to thank Him and reflect on what He spoke to you.

II.III

WEEK TWO

Day Three

Perseverance in Prayer

READ

Luke 18:1–8, “Always pray and not give up.”

REVIEW

How does today’s passage relate to this week’s topic?

RELATE

What are some ways you identify with this passage?

RESPOND

What actions can you take today to live out this scripture?

READ MORE

- 1 Chronicles 16:10–11, *Seek His face always*
- Micah 7:7, *Waiting for God*
- Luke 11:5–10, *Bread from a friend*

Is there something you’ve been praying about for a long time, and frankly you’re weary of asking? Name it.

REFLECT

Write out a prayer to God. Use this space to thank Him and reflect on what He spoke to you.



THE POWER OF PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Many times in my life, I have gone through a situation where I knew I needed to pray but I didn't know exactly what to pray. There was a season in my life when I found myself praying, "Be with me, Lord," or "Help me, Lord," over and over again. These are great things to pray, don't get me wrong. But the Lord is always with us. And He stands by, ready to help us in our time of need.

Sometimes the most powerful prayers you can pray are when you pray the scripture itself. Hebrews 4:12 tells us that the word of God is alive and active. Have you ever tried praying scripture over a specific situation?

For example, this week's memory verse (Philippians 4:6-7) could be turned into a personal prayer like this: "Lord, calm my anxiety. Remind me in every situation to come to You in prayer, expressing my thanksgiving for Your goodness and making my requests to You. Then may Your unimaginable peace guard my heart and mind in Christ Jesus."

So let's pray the words of God back to Him. Use this list of scriptures to pray when you or someone you love is facing a specific situation.

Select a passage of scripture below you want to pray over your life or a loved one. Write it down on a sticky note and place it somewhere you will see it often (like your bathroom mirror or your car dashboard). Practice praying these scriptures daily.

FEELING FRIGHTENED OR ANXIOUS:

Pray Deuteronomy 31:8, Psalm 23:4, Isaiah 26:3, Isaiah 41:10, and Philippians 4:6-7.

FEELING CONFUSED:

Pray Psalm 32:8, Proverbs 3:5-6, and James 1:5.

IF YOU'RE WEAK OR WEARY:

Pray Isaiah 40:31, Matthew 11:28-29, and 2 Corinthians 12:9-10.

IF YOU'RE DISCOURAGED:

Pray Jeremiah 29:11 and Romans 8:28.

FEELING ATTACKED:

Pray Psalm 18:3, Psalm 27:1, and Isaiah 54:7.

BEING TEMPTED:

Pray James 4:7.

FEELING GUILTY:

Pray 2 Chronicles 7:14 and 1 John 1:9.

NEEDING PROVISION:

Pray Psalm 37:4, Matthew 6:31-33, and Philippians 4:19.

IF YOU'RE ILL:

Pray Jeremiah 30:17 and James 5:14-15.

How do you think praying scripture could enhance your everyday life?

II.IV

WEEK TWO

Day Four

Praying according to God's will

READ

Luke 22:39–46, “Not my will, but yours be done.”

REVIEW

How does today's passage relate to this week's topic?

RELATE

What are some ways you identify with this passage?

RESPOND

What actions can you take today to live out this scripture?

READ MORE

- *Romans 8:26–27, The Spirit's intercession according to God's will*
- *James 4:2–3, Why do you ask?*
- *1 John 5:13–15, Requests within the will of God? Granted!*

Why do you think we often tack on the phrase, “if it is Your will” to our prayers?

REFLECT

Write out a prayer to God. Use this space to thank Him and reflect on what He spoke to you.

RECITE

Write out this week's memory passage, Philippians 4:6–7, and spend some time committing it to memory.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6—7

6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. **7** And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.



GREAT PRAYERS OF THE BIBLE

There is no wrong way to pray. Sometimes prayer is a cry for deliverance. Sometimes it is a request for help. Sometimes it is a moment of gratitude. Sometimes it is a somber apology. Below is a list of some of the most famous prayers in the Bible prayed by many of our favorite characters.

Today, select two or three to read (and make yourself a note to come back and read them all). Notice that although they are all praying to the same God, and often about similar topics, no two prayers are alike.

EXODUS 32:11-13

Moses' prayer for Israel in the wilderness

JONAH 2:2-9

Jonah's prayer for salvation

1 SAMUEL 2:1-10

Hannah's prayer of faith after infertility

HABAKKUK 3:2-19

Habakkuk's prayer of patience for justice

1 KINGS 3:6-9

Solomon's prayer for wisdom

MATTHEW 6:9-13

Jesus' model prayer

1 KINGS 8:23-53

Solomon's prayer at temple dedication

LUKE 1:39-45

Elizabeth's prayer of blessing

1 CHRONICLES 29:9-20

David's prayer at the end of life

LUKE 1:46-55

Mary's prayer of joy

NEHEMIAH 1:5-11

Nehemiah's prayer for success

JOHN 17

Jesus prayer for His followers

PSALM 51:1-12

David's prayer of repentance

EPHESIANS 1:15-23

Paul's prayer for wisdom for the Ephesians

PSALM 139

David's prayer of surrender

EPHESIANS 3:14-21

Paul's prayer for power for the Ephesians

DANIEL 9:4-19

Daniel's confession on behalf of his people

REVELATION 19:1-8

Heaven's hallelujah



How did the prayers you read encourage you to pray authentically to God? Is there an area in your life where you need to pray from your heart?

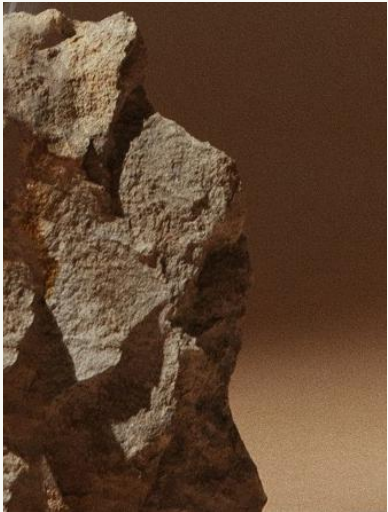


ESSENTIAL TRUTH:

Worship is the outward expression of our knowledge and appreciation for God's greatness and His goodness.

Week III.

WORSHIPING



FOR YOUR TENDER
MERCIES MEAN MORE
to ME than LIFE ITSELF.
HOW I LOVE AND PRAISE
YOU, GOD!

DAILY I WILL WORSHIP
YOU PASSIONATELY AND
WITH ALL MY HEART
MY ARMS WILL WAVE
TO YOU LIKE BANNERS
OF PRAISE.

PSALM 63:3-4 TPT

PSALM 63:3—4 TPT

3 For your tender mercies mean more to me than life itself. How I love and praise you, God! **4** Daily I will worship you passionately and with all my heart. My arms will wave to you like banners of praise.

Video Teaching Notes

BIBLE PASSAGE: Psalm 63:1–5 TPT

I.

How does the way you grew up influence the way you worship corporately? Are there ways you would like to be more expressive?

II.

Share with the group one song that instantly helps you feel connected to God and why.

III.I

WEEK THREE

Day One

Lifting hands to God

READ

Psalm 63:1–8 TPT, “In your name I will lift up my hands.”

REVIEW

How does today’s passage relate to this week’s topic?

RELATE

What are some ways you identify with this passage?

RESPOND

What actions can you take today to live out this scripture?

READ MORE

- *Psalm 141:1–2, Lifting hands, like a sacrifice*
- *Job 11:13–15, Hands stretched out to God*
- *Ephesians 5:18–20; Colossians 3:16, Teaching, singing, and building each other up*
- *1 Timothy 2:8, Lifting holy hands*

Have you ever had a moment when worship momentarily lifted a burden you were carrying?

REFLECT

Write out a prayer to God. Use this space to thank Him and reflect on what He spoke to you.

WORSHIP POSTURES IN THE BIBLE

If you think worship in Bible times involved a good bit of ritual and regulation, you're right. Often, worship meant going to the temple, reciting scriptures, and offering sacrifices. Today, traditions are still a part of worship, but they are not the only part.

Throughout the Bible, we find people being demonstrative in their worship. Sometimes this happened during corporate worship in the temple; other times it was in private. Scripture shows us people physically expressing themselves in worship:

BOWING DOWN OR KNEELING

Psalm 95:6–7, Luke 5:8, Romans 14:11, Philippians 2:9–11

LYING PROSTRATE

Deuteronomy 9:18, Ezekiel 9:8

LIFTING HANDS

Psalm 28:2, 63:4, 134:2; Lamentations 2:19

CLAPPING

Psalm 47:1

DANCING

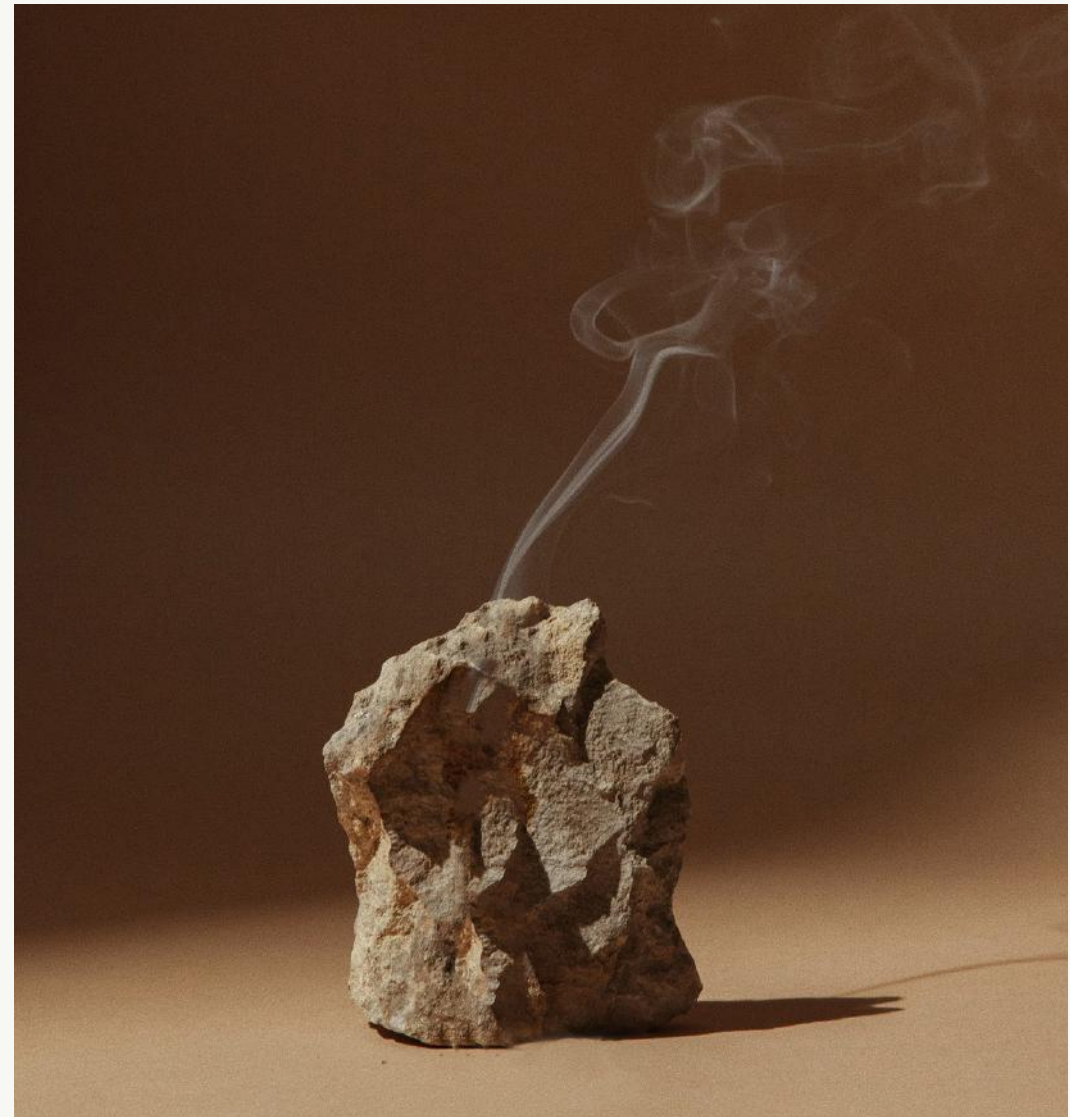
Exodus 15:20–21, 2 Samuel 6:5, 14–16; Psalm 149:3, 150; Jeremiah 31:4, 13

SHOUTING

Psalm 81:1, Isaiah 12:6

Some of us came from church backgrounds where there was zero physical expression of worship. Others grew up seeing all of the above. Still others did not grow up in church at all and have no frame of reference for worship.

The purpose of worship is to express our reverence and awe for the God we serve. Remember, God cares more about the posture of our hearts than the position of our bodies. So obviously, you do not have to lift your hands or even pray out loud to worship God. But sometimes when I am struggling to *feel* the presence of God, or even to focus my attention on God, I find that when I physically express my love for Him, my heart and mind follow.



If you were to add one new physical expression to the way you worship, what would it be?

III.II

WEEK THREE

Day Two

Worship: a powerful weapon

READ

2 Chronicles 20:1–30, “They went out at the head of the army.”

REVIEW

How does today’s passage relate to this week’s topic?

RELATE

What are some ways you identify with this passage?

RESPOND

What actions can you take today to live out this scripture?

READ MORE

- Joshua 6:1–21, Priests and trumpets bring down a wall
- Acts 16:16–40, Praying and singing when God set them free
- Ephesians 6:10–18, The armor of God, including prayer

What battles are you currently fighting, and how can worship be a weapon for you?

REFLECT

Write out a prayer to God. Use this space to thank Him and reflect on what He spoke to you.

III.III

WEEK THREE

Day Three *Worshiping even when life is tough*

READ *1 Samuel 1:1–20, “Hannah went up to the house of the Lord.”*

REVIEW *How does today’s passage relate to this week’s topic?*

RELATE *What are some ways you identify with this passage?*

RESPOND *What actions can you take today to live out this scripture?*

READ MORE

- *Psalm 34:1–7, A poor man speaks*
- *Habakkuk 3:17–19, Though the fig tree does not bud*
- *Luke 1:46–55, Another blessed mother praises God*

Rewrite Habakkuk 3:17–19, inserting your own fears in place of the agricultural examples. (For example, “Though I never find a wife, and I never have children... yet I will rejoice in the Lord.”)

REFLECT *Write out a prayer to God. Use this space to thank Him and reflect on what He spoke to you.*



PSALMS FOR EVERY SITUATION

The book of Psalms was Israel's hymnbook. Or to update the imagery, it was Israel's worship playlist. Just like we have songs today that stir our faith—songs that make us reflect and songs that teach us the foundations of our faith—the book of Psalms was all of that for Israel.

These psalms reflect just about every emotion a follower of God can experience. They may not be as modern as the latest releases from Elevation Worship, but if we give them a chance, we'll find they can guide our worship lives no matter what we're going through.

FEELING FRUSTRATED:

The psalms of lament present a problematic situation to the Lord, asking for His help (Psalms 6, 10, 12, 13, 38, 42, 43, 130).

FEELING GRATEFUL:

The psalms of thanksgiving express gratitude for what God has done (Psalms 9, 30, 34, 92, 95, 106, 107, 136).

NEEDING GUIDANCE:

The psalms of wisdom celebrate seeking truth in God and obeying that truth faithfully (Psalms 1, 14, 19, 37, 73, 91, 127, 133).

FEELING NERVOUS:

The psalms of confidence help us to trust God more when times are hard (Psalms 11, 16, 23, 27, 62, 121, 125, 131, 133).

LOOKING TO GROUND YOUR FAITH:

The historical psalms recount Israel's history, including both mistakes and victories, and underscore God's faithfulness (Psalms 78, 105, 135, 136).

FEELING AWE-INSPIRED BY GOD:

The psalms of praise shine a light on God's great attributes and works (Psalms 8, 40, 65, 98, 145, 146, 150).

LOVING GOD'S WORD:

The psalms of the law express dedication to God's commands (Psalms 1, 18, 119).

WORSHIPING JESUS AS LORD:

The royal psalms talk about Israel's kings as conduits for God's blessing to the nation. Ultimately, they point to Jesus the Messiah and King of kings (Psalms 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 89, 101, 110, 144).

NEEDING A KICK IN THE PANTS:

The prophetic psalms call people back to faithfulness to God (Psalms 33, 50, 81, 89).

Based on what's going on in your heart and life right now, which type of psalm would bring you comfort or help?

III.IV

WEEK THREE

Day Four

Offering ourselves to God

READ

Romans 12:1–2, “This is your true and proper worship.”

REVIEW

How does today’s passage relate to this week’s topic?

RELATE

What are some ways you identify with this passage?

RESPOND

What actions can you take today to live out this scripture?

READ MORE

- John 4:19–24, *Worshiping in Spirit and in truth*
- Hebrews 13:15–16, *Continual sacrifice of praise*

What do you think it means to worship “in the Spirit and in truth” (John 4:23–24)?

REFLECT

Write out a prayer to God. Use this space to thank Him and reflect on what He spoke to you.

RECITE

Write out this week's memory passage, Psalm 63:3–4, and spend some time committing it to memory.

PSALM 63:3—4 TPT

3 Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. **4** I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands.



Week IV.

HEARING



ESSENTIAL TRUTH:

God is always speaking to us. When we enter into a relationship with Him, we learn to hear His voice.



THE GATEKEEPER
OPENS THE GATE FOR HIM,
AND THE SHEEP LISTEN
TO HIS VOICE.

HE CALLS HIS OWN
SHEEP BY NAME AND
LEADS THEM OUT.
WHEN HE HAS BROUGHT OUT
ALL HIS OWN, HE GOES ON
AHEAD OF THEM, AND
HIS SHEEP FOLLOW HIM
BECAUSE THEY KNOW
HIS VOICE.

JOHN 10:3-4 NIV

JOHN 10:3-4

3 The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. **4** When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.

Video Teaching Notes

BIBLE PASSAGE: John 10:2-5, 14

I.

Share about a time when you heard (or felt) the voice of God guiding you or encouraging you.

II.

What are a few things that distract or block you from hearing God's voice?

IV.I

WEEK FOUR

Day One

God's guidance

READ

John 10:1–18, “His sheep follow him because they know his voice.”

REVIEW

How does today's passage relate to this week's topic?

RELATE

What are some ways you identify with this passage?

RESPOND

What actions can you take today to live out this scripture?

READ MORE

- *1 Samuel 3, The Lord speaks to young Samuel*
- *Psalm 23, The Lord, my Shepherd*

What is one area in your life where you're hoping God will give you some guidance?

REFLECT

Write out a prayer to God. Use this space to thank Him and reflect on what He spoke to you.

WHAT MAKES A SHEPHERD GOOD?

By Jesus' time, a shepherd with a herd of sheep or goats grazing on a hillside had already been a familiar sight in Israel for thousands of years (and in parts of that land, it still is).

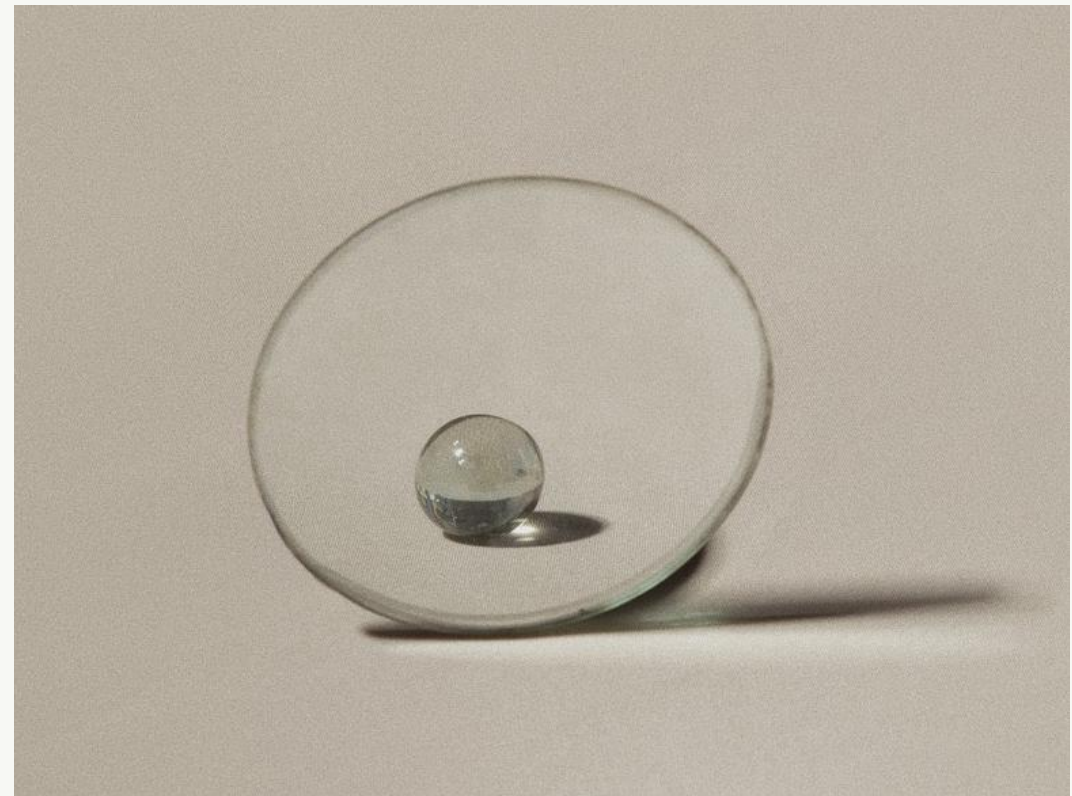
Hardly a glamorous job, shepherding involved unpleasant smells, exposure to the elements, and long periods of boredom interrupted by moments of terrifying danger. The shepherd had to find pasture and water for his flock, which often meant moving around the countryside seasonally. He carried a sling and a wooden club to fend off wild animals or livestock poachers, along with a staff to prod the sheep. But when moving from place to place, he typically led his sheep by walking in front of them, rather than pushing them from behind—and so shepherding became an obvious analogy for guidance.

Jesus used the imagery of shepherding more than once in His teaching, and never more powerfully than when He compared Himself to a shepherd (John 10:1–21). His description reflected common shepherding practices of His day.

Entering by the gate. When far from home, a shepherd would use stones to build an enclosure with a single opening to corral the sheep at night. He would sometimes sleep across the entrance, and thus in a sense he would become the gate of the sheep pen. Robbers, by contrast, would slip over the wall in the dark of night and try to get away with some of the valuable animals.

Listening to his voice. Different herds would often mingle at watering places, so each shepherd had a distinctive call that he had taught his own sheep to recognize. They would come at his call, while the other sheep would keep their distance from him.

Laying down his life. Sometimes shepherds were the owners of the sheep, and sometimes they were people hired to do a job. When danger came, the hired hands didn't have enough investment in the well-being of the sheep to risk their own lives. Jesus, though, was a good shepherd, one committed to His sheep—us!



How do you need Jesus to be a shepherd to you today? Guidance? Provision? Correction? Protection? Rescue?

IV.II

WEEK FOUR

Day Two

God's love towards us

READ

Matthew 3:13–17, “With him I am well pleased.”

REVIEW

How does today's passage relate to this week's topic?

RELATE

What are some ways you identify with this passage?

RESPOND

What actions can you take today to live out this scripture?

READ MORE

- *Proverbs 4:11–13, Life's GPS*
- *Luke 15:11–24, A father who surprises with acceptance*
- *Romans 8:31–39, Inseparable from God's love*
- *1 John 3:1, The Father's great love*

Trying to look at yourself the way God looks at you (and of course none of us can do that perfectly!), what affirming messages do you think He would want you to hear today?

REFLECT

Write out a prayer to God. Use this space to thank Him and reflect on what He spoke to you.

IV.III

WEEK FOUR

Day Three

Wisdom from God

READ

James 1:5–8, “If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God.”

REVIEW

How does today’s passage relate to this week’s topic?

RELATE

What are some ways you identify with this passage?

RESPOND

What actions can you take today to live out this scripture?

READ MORE

- *1 Kings 3:4–15, Solomon’s number-one request*
- *Proverbs 3:13–26, Better than silver or gold*
- *James 3:13–18, Two kinds of wisdom*

What kinds of less-important things do we tend to prioritize over wisdom?

REFLECT

Write out a prayer to God. Use this space to thank Him and reflect on what He spoke to you.

WAYS GOD SPOKE TO PEOPLE IN THE BIBLE

Have you ever noticed how the closer you are with someone, the easier it is to speak to them? I am not necessarily talking about ease of conversation. I can speak to my husband with a look. I can communicate to my kids with one gesture. With certain friends, all I need is one emoji. If I sent my friend Nicole a text that said, "Need to go get some fries," she would know to show up at my house ASAP.

God has so many ways to speak to us as well. We're all wired uniquely, and because our God is incredibly personal, He understands that one form of communication will not work for everyone. I find that God wants me to hear His voice more than I want to hear it. He is always speaking. He can speak through your private study of the Bible or a sermon (of course), but also through a song on the radio, an interview on a podcast, or a conversation with a friend. He is so creative, He doesn't even need humans to speak to you on His behalf. He can whisper words of encouragement through a sunset or gently bring a song or scripture to your mind. The closer your relationship with God is, the easier it is to hear from Him.

Here are a few different ways God spoke to people in the Bible:

GENESIS 37:5-11

To Joseph through dreams

1 KINGS 19:11-13

To Elijah in a whisper

EXODUS 3:1-15

To Moses in a burning bush

DANIEL 5

To Daniel by writing on a wall

EXODUS 19:19

To Moses through a heavenly trumpet

DANIEL 10

To Daniel through visions

NUMBERS 22:21-39

To Balaam through a donkey

LUKE 1:26-38

To Mary through an angel

JUDGES 6:33-40

To Gideon through signs

LUKE 3:22

To Jesus from the heavens

1 SAMUEL 3:4-20

To Samuel audibly in the night

ROMANS 1:20

To all of us in nature



What is one unique way God has spoken to you?

IV.IV

WEEK FOUR

Day Four

The Holy Spirit's instruction

READ

John 14:15–17, 26; 15:26; 16:13–15, “The Spirit of truth...will glorify me.”

REVIEW

How does today's passage relate to this week's topic?

RELATE

What are some ways you identify with this passage?

RESPOND

What actions can you take today to live out this scripture?

READ MORE

- *Psalm 25:4–7, A prayer for insight*
- *Proverbs 16:9, Our plans and the Lord's plan*
- *Luke 12:11–12, The Spirit teaches what to say*
- *Acts 16:6–10, The Spirit changes Paul's itinerary*
- *1 Corinthians 2:6–16, Having the mind of Christ through the Spirit*

How do you know when the Holy Spirit is speaking to you?

REFLECT

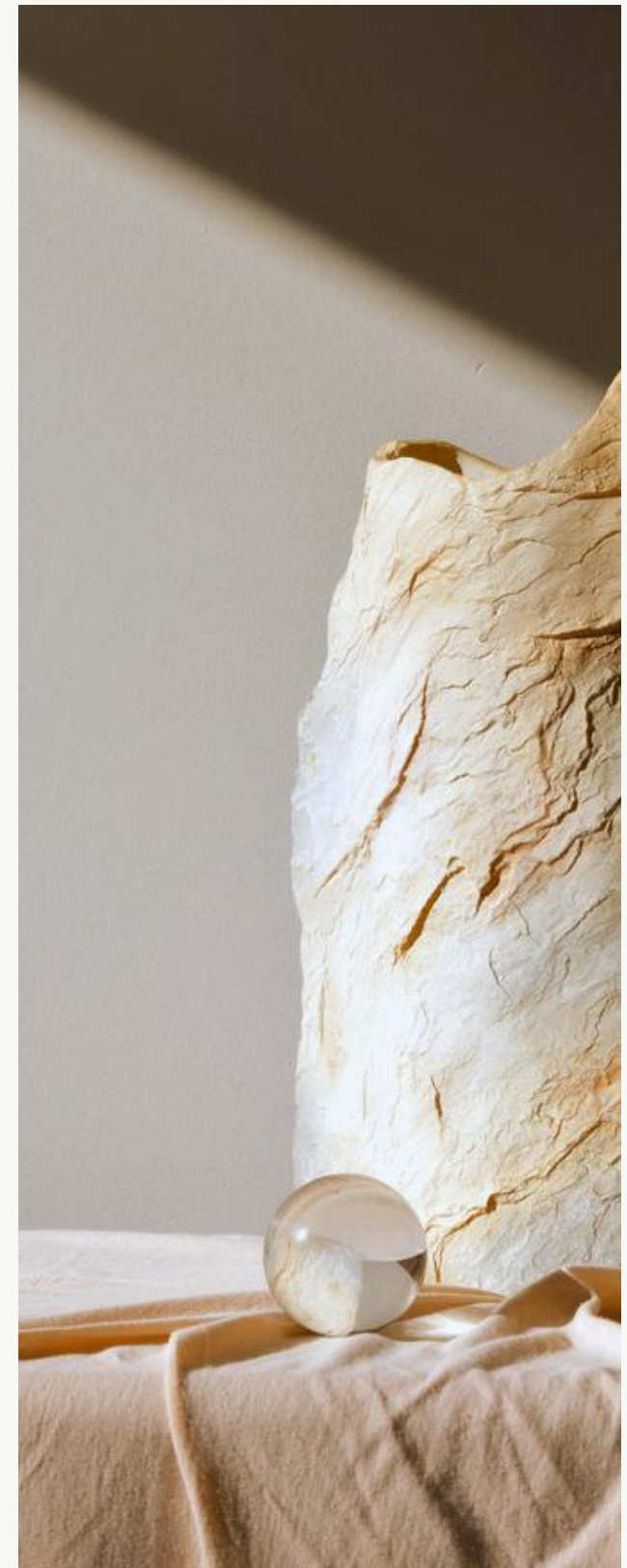
Write out a prayer to God. Use this space to thank Him and reflect on what He spoke to you.

RECITE

Write out this week's memory passage, John 10:3–4, and spend some time committing it to memory.

JOHN 10:3–4

3 The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. **4** When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.



Week V.

GIVING



ESSENTIAL TRUTH:

Giving generously to the work of ministry is an act of worship that flows out of our gratitude for what God has done.



EACH OF YOU SHOULD
GIVE WHAT YOU HAVE DECIDED
IN YOUR HEART TO GIVE,
NOT RELUCTANTLY OR UNDER
COMPULSION, FOR GOD LOVES A
CHEERFUL GIVER.

AND GOD IS ABLE TO BLESS
YOU ABUNDANTLY, SO THAT
IN ALL THINGS AT ALL
TIMES, HAVING ALL THAT
YOU NEED, YOU WILL
ABOUND IN EVERY
GOOD WORK.

2 CORINTHIANS 9:7-8 ^{NIV}

2 CORINTHIANS 9:7—8

7 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

Video Teaching Notes

BIBLE PASSAGE: 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

I.

Which is more difficult for you, giving consistently or giving cheerfully?

II.

Share about a time when God provided for you (remember provision is not always monetary).

WEEK FIVE

Day One

Generosity's rebound

READ

2 Corinthians 9:6–15, “Whoever sows generously will also reap generously.”

REVIEW

How does today's passage relate to this week's topic?

RELATE

What are some ways you identify with this passage?

RESPOND

What actions can you take today to live out this scripture?

READ MORE

- Luke 6:38, *Measure for measure*
- Acts 20:35, *The greater blessing*
- 1 Corinthians 16:1–4, *Paul's collection strategy*

If it's more blessed to give than to receive, why do we usually prefer to receive?

Tell about a time when you were blessed by giving.

REFLECT

Write out a prayer to God. Use this space to thank Him and reflect on what He spoke to you.



A TRICKY FUNDRAISER

Have you ever been skeptical of giving money to an organization or an offering? Have you ever wondered if your money was being put to good use when you gave to a charity? You are definitely not alone. Even the early church wrestled with this concern.

Around AD 44, a Christian prophet named Agabus stood up during a gathering of Jesus followers in Jerusalem and shocked everybody by foretelling a severe famine that would strike broadly across the Roman Empire. Historians say an event known as the Great Famine did in fact occur around AD 46 and later. Christians in the Gentile city of Antioch responded to the poverty of the Jerusalem believers, caused by the Great Famine, by gathering a collection of money for them (Acts 11:27–30).

Apparently the economic downturn in Jerusalem did not improve quickly (perhaps due to more dry years that followed), because around 10 years later, the apostle Paul was organizing a fundraising drive for the Jerusalem church among the Gentile churches he had established in what are now Greece and Turkey.

We don't know all the details, but it seems like, while some of the Gentile churches responded enthusiastically to Paul's appeal (2 Corinthians 8:1–5), others were more reluctant—including the church in Corinth, where for some reason the collection got held up for a year (2 Corinthians 8:10–12). It's likely some of the Corinthians suspected Paul was trying to swindle them, because Paul repeatedly

defended his integrity in money matters (2 Corinthians 2:17; 7:2; 8:20–21; 12:16–18). To head off objections, Paul suggested a gradual savings plan and invited representatives from Corinth to go with him to Jerusalem to see that the money was properly distributed (1 Corinthians 16:1–4). He also assured the church that the gift was voluntary and that they would be richly blessed for contributing (2 Corinthians 9:6–11).

Paul must have worked things out with the Corinthians, because in his letter to the Romans, he said he was about to travel to Jerusalem with the money he had collected in Achaia, the province

whose largest city was Corinth (Romans 15:25–26). But at the same time, he asked for prayer that the Jerusalem church would accept the gift (verses 31–32). So apparently, Paul had complications on both the donor and the recipient sides of his fundraising.

We should be glad Paul's fundraising didn't go smoothly. Why? Because it forced him to pen a theology of generosity that guides us to this day (2 Corinthians 8 and 9).

We should all ask ourselves, are we ready "to be generous and willing to share" (1 Timothy 6:18)?

When you get appeals for money (teens going on short-term missions, GoFundMe appeals on Facebook, and so on), how do you make your decisions about whether to give or not?

V.II

WEEK FIVE

Day Two

God's 10-percent plan

READ

Malachi 3:6–12, “Test me in this.”

REVIEW

How does today's passage relate to this week's topic?

RELATE

What are some ways you identify with this passage?

RESPOND

What actions can you take today to live out this scripture?

READ MORE

- *Genesis 14:18–20, First known tithe*
- *Leviticus 27:30, A one-verse summary of the tithing laws*
- *Matthew 23:23, Jesus on tithing*

What's your experience with tithing?

What are your feelings about tithing?

REFLECT

Write out a prayer to God. Use this space to thank Him and reflect on what He spoke to you.



ARE WE SUPPOSED TO TITHE?

The word tithe means “tenth,” and in scripture, it refers to a sort of flat-tax rate used to gather resources for various good purposes. In fact, the Law of Moses appears to prescribe three tithes:

THE MINISTRY TITHE—given annually to support the priests and the work of the temple (Deuteronomy 14:22–23)

THE FESTIVAL TITHE—given annually for the celebration of required feasts (Deuteronomy 12:17–19)

THE CHARITY TITHE—given every three years to help the Levites and the poor (Deuteronomy 14:28–29)

The Israelites were not always faithful in paying their tithes, and God did not

take this omission lightly. The prophet Malachi, writing about 400 years before Christ, delivered a scathing message in which God said withholding tithes amounted to “robbing” Him (Malachi 3:6–12).

Today, faithful, well-intentioned Christians come down on opposite sides of the question of whether God still expects us to tithe.

Some people think the tithe was a part of the Old Testament Law that Christians today are not bound to, because in Christ we live under grace. They say we should be generous and give regularly (probably a lot more than most of us do!), but that we don’t need to use 10 percent as a required minimum.

Others—including the leadership at Elevation Church—believe the scriptures do teach tithing for Christians. Consider two pieces of evidence.

Evidence #1: Tithing existed among God’s people prior to the Law of Moses. Since Genesis 4:4 refers to Abel offering the firstfruits of his flock, some see tithing already in existence in the second generation of the human race. Certainly, Abraham (Genesis 14:20) and Jacob (Genesis 28:22) gave tithes—and that was centuries before Moses came on the scene. Since tithing predates the Old Testament Law, it must be a basic principle that continues even apart from the Law of Moses.

Evidence #2: While criticizing the legalistic Pharisee group, Jesus said, “You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, *without neglecting the former*” (Matthew 23:23, emphasis added). In other words, they should combine the “letter of the law” in tithing with the “spirit of the law” in moral goodness.

And so should we.

If someone else in your Essentials group, or another person you know, is a tither, ask them if they feel God has blessed them for their faithfulness in this area. What can you learn from this person?

The festival tithe and charity tithe are not required of Christians, but the ministry tithe still pertains. All of us who call Elevation Church our spiritual home should be contributing 10 percent of our income to its budget (or at least working toward that goal), as an act of faithfulness to God and an investment in the spread of the gospel. And if you have ever been a part of our year-end offering, you know we believe that sometimes God may also call us to give an over-and-above offering, just as Paul urged the Gentile Christians to donate to a fund for impoverished people in Jerusalem.

We believe in this so strongly that we even tithe as an organization. We give 12 percent of every dollar (more than a tithe) back out into organizations that are feeding the poor and helping the needy all over the world.

God will always provide the means to give what He asks of us—and more besides. He says in Malachi 3:10, “Test me in this...and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.”

Tithing can be scary. It requires bold faith. But God promises to bless us when we do it.

V.III

WEEK FIVE

Day Three

Putting your trust where it belongs

READ

1 Timothy 6:17–19, Hope in God, not money

REVIEW

How does today's passage relate to this week's topic?

RELATE

What are some ways you identify with this passage?

RESPOND

What actions can you take today to live out this scripture?

READ MORE

- *Matthew 6:19–21, 24, Choose your master*
- *Matthew 19:16–30, "Sell your possessions and give to the poor."*
- *Luke 12:13–34, Rich toward self or rich toward God?*
- *1 Timothy 6:6–10, The contented and the discontented*

How have money or possessions ever proved to be a letdown to you?

REFLECT

Write out a prayer to God. Use this space to thank Him and reflect on what He spoke to you.

V.IV

WEEK FIVE

Day Four

Above-and-beyond giving prompted by love of God

READ

Mark 12:41–44, A widow gives her last coins

REVIEW

How does today's passage relate to this week's topic?

RELATE

What are some ways you identify with this passage?

RESPOND

What actions can you take today to live out this scripture?

READ MORE

- *Exodus 36:1–7, The Israelites donating more than enough*
- *2 Kings 4:1–7, Another widow, blessed in supernatural measure*
- *Luke 7:36–50, Expensive perfume*
- *Luke 10:30–35, Generous with more than just money*

Why are some people eager to give and other people grudging? Which are you?

REFLECT

Write out a prayer to God. Use this space to thank Him and reflect on what He spoke to you.

RECITE

Write out this week's memory passage, 2 Corinthians 9:7-8, and spend some time committing it to memory.

2 CORINTHIANS 9:7—8

7 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. **8** And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work



UNEXPECTED BLESSINGS OF GENEROSITY

Jesus once said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). We’ve already seen that if we sow generously, we will also reap generously (2 Corinthians 9:6). God provides financially for those who give. But could there be other benefits to generosity besides material provision?

Yes.

Paul said, “Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that” (1 Timothy 6:6–8).

He lived this way himself, too. “I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances,” Paul wrote. “I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of

being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength” (Philippians 4:11–13).

Jesus encouraged the same attitude. “Do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:31–33).

At Elevation, we say, “See what God can do through you.” And truly, there is no greater joy than that of knowing you were used by God. True peace, contentment, and joy only come to those who live their lives with open hands to the Lord.



Would you consider yourself content, or not? How is this connected to your giving habits?



ESSENTIAL TRUTH:

Growing in our faith can be as simple as obeying the things in scripture that we already know to do.

Week VI.

CONCLUSION



WHO LOOKS AT HIS FACE
 IN A MIRROR AND, AFTER
 LOOKING AT HIMSELF, GOES
 AWAY & IMMEDIATELY FORGETS
 WHAT HE LOOKS LIKE.
 BUT WHOEVER LOOKS
 INTENTLY INTO THE PERFECT
 LAW THAT GIVES FREEDOM,
 DO NOT MERELY LISTEN TO
 THE WORD, AND SO DECEIVE
 YOURSELVES. DO WHAT IT SAYS.
 ANYONE WHO LISTENS TO THE
 WORD BUT DOES NOT DO WHAT
 IT SAYS IS LIKE SOMEONE
 AND CONTINUES IN IT—NOT
 FORGETTING WHAT THEY
 HAVE HEARD, BUT DOING IT—
 THEY WILL BE BLESSED
 IN WHAT THEY DO.

JAMES 1:22-25 NIV

JAMES 1:22—25

22 Bless and praise the Lord, you mighty warriors, ministers who serve him well and fulfill his desires. **23** Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror **24** and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. **25** But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

Video Teaching Notes

BIBLE PASSAGE: James 1:22-25

I.

Deep is doing. What week of the study has made the deepest impact on your faith because of a step you have taken?

II.

Think about an area of your faith where you want to grow. What's a step you haven't taken yet that you can do this week?

Personal Reflection

Essentials study start date:

____/____/____

Completion date:

____/____/____

Things that were going on in my life at the time included these:

My favorite part of this study of faith essentials was this:

*Prayer requests from my group that I want to keep
bringing to the Lord include these:*

*Something God revealed to me during this Bible study
that I never want to forget is this:*

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Holly Furtick and her husband, Steven, are the founders of Elevation Church, where Steven is the lead pastor. Elevation launched in 2006 with the vision to see people far from God raised to life in Christ—and they have seen the church grow to reach thousands of people in many different locations. Holly loves having a front-row seat, whether she’s shouting down her husband while he preaches or getting to see people grow in their faith.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in education from North Greenville University. Pastor Steven and Holly live in Charlotte, North Carolina, with their two sons, Elijah and Graham, and daughter, Abbey.

When she’s not writing, taking care of her family, or helping lead Elevation Church, Holly spends her time “reading” audio books, attempting to play tennis, and grow her own vegetables. Follow her on Instagram @hollyfurtick and Facebook.

Eric Stanford and his wife, Elisa, run a writing and editing studio called Edit Resource. He holds a bachelor’s degree from Judson University and a master’s degree in theology from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

Eric lives in the woods of Colorado with his wife and two teenage daughters, Eden and Elizabeth.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Steven Furtick, thank you for having the vision to see people far from God raised to life in Christ. Thank you for creating a place where we can come together and collectively grow in our faith. You never give less than 100 percent of yourself and you inspire us to follow suit. Thank you for giving me, every person who worked on this project, and every group leader an opportunity to see God work through us.

To each of the Elevation eGroup Leaders, thank you for opening up your life so others could belong to a small community of believers and grow in their faith. Without you, this study would be nothing.

To those who brought this project to life, your dedication, perseverance, and support are so encouraging. People around the world will grow in their relationship with God because of you and your impact on this study, and I can't thank you enough for that.

To everyone who was part of *Essentials*, thank you for using your gifts and talents to remind us what it looks like to build an everyday faith. Through you, people are hearing the gospel and building a faith foundation that will help them stand strong, no matter what comes their way.

CONTENT AND EDITORS

Jessi Murphy, Mike Marshall, Kit Tosello, Kristin Spann

DESIGN

Sophie Smith

BRANDING AND ART DIRECTION

Lindsey Pruitt, Soul Twin Studio

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Heather Chamberlain, Ashley Hollingsworth

CUSTOM HAND LETTERING

Nathan Johnson, Blacklist Studio

VIDEO AND CREATIVE

J.Cody Hall, Brock Gregor, Colten Marsh, TJ Meade, Laytin Cortez, Alejandro Estrada, Lindsey Newton, Kelly Draddy, Alyse Gianino, Ama Meza, Sean Lyon, Junior Hernandez

SUPPORT

Ashlee Tucker, Millie Rivera, Nicole Phillips

DIGITAL

Autumn English, Katie Green, the Elevation Church Digital Team

MINISTRIES SUPPORT

Brittany Akinsola, Aliscia Freitas

* LUKE 6: 47-48 ESV

47 Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: **48** he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built.

PHILIPPIANS 4: 6-7 NIV

6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. **7** And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

PSALM 63: 3-4 TPT

3 For your tender mercies mean more to me than life itself. How I love and praise you, God! **4** Daily I will worship you passionately and with all my heart. My arms will wave to you like banners of praise.

JOHN 10: 3-4 NIV

3 The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. **4** When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.

2 CORINTHIANS 9: 7-8 NIV

7 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. **8** And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

