

UNEARTHED

**Digging beneath the surface and bringing
our whole selves before God.**

WELCOME

Welcome to the Unearthed series! You may be engaging in this journey because you're new to following Jesus and learning what it means to be a disciple for the very first time. Or you may have been following Jesus for many years, but you want to dig deeper. Or you may be frustrated with the lack of transformation you've seen in your own life, are wanting more, and are hoping to finally experience breakthrough.

Whatever your reason for being here, we're happy to journey alongside you as you seek to uncover those parts of yourself that Jesus wants to still transform.

Brennan Manning has said that, "The temptation of the age is to look good without being good."

And in the hurry, distraction, and moral apathy of our modern world, that tends to be what happens to us - we scramble to look good without becoming good.

But what if Jesus has more for us?

Put simply, our hope is to unearth the places in our lives where we do not yet look like Jesus, live like Jesus, or love like Jesus, so that, in the Holy Spirit, we can transform those areas of our lives to become more like Jesus.

Over the next ten weeks, we'll explore the following Old Testament stories and consequential themes to unearth ten common experiences of being human. The goal? To learn what walking the Spirit looks like in each of them.

- 01 It was never meant to be this way (Adam & Eve)
- 02 God, you, and your messed up family (David & Co.)
- 03 When life is unfair and people treat you really badly (Joseph)
- 04 What lives in the dark (David and Nathan)
- 06 Just straight selfish (Jonah)
- 07 Paralyzed by Fear (Elijah)
- 08 From success to failure (Gideon)
- 09 How to lose everything (Samson)
- 10 Finding God in the dark (Job)

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This journal book will be a bit different from past renditions. Over the course of this series, we're going to be hyper-focused on actually taking time to experiment with some new rhythms and practices in order to "abide" in Jesus' teaching.

This devotional book will have pages for you to take sermon notes, QR Codes that will link you to podcast content, weekly reflection questions that will help you synthesize your takeaways into your heart, mind, body, and soul, and additional resources to guide you should you want to take a deeper dive into each week's content.

Additionally, you'll find practices to experiment with each week. The key is to actually DO them. Be intentional. Go slow. Remember you won't be perfect at any of it. The key is not to do the practice, but to use these as tools to allow the Holy Spirit to transform you through the practice.

Ideally, you'll utilize this book on the weekend and in your personal devotional time. Use the pages to take sermon notes and to write down thoughts or questions, feelings and reflections, things that encourage you, things that challenge you, and where you feel like God might be inviting you to take a step of faith.

To get the most out of this book and this sermon series, we suggest that you:

- Don't go it alone! Journey through this material and these practices with your life group. If you don't have a life group, find others in your family or perhaps one close friend and invite them into the journey!
- Fill out the participant covenant (if you're doing this with your life group).
- Take notes on the sermon each week.
- Commit to engaging in the practice each week.
- Listen to the podcast conversations each week.
- Bring your thoughts, invitations, reflections, and sermon notes to life group each week.

As individuals and as a group, our hope is that this series and these practices will help you connect to Jesus, grow as a disciple, and become an ever more pleasing aroma to the Lord and to those around you (2 Corinthians 2:15).

THE CREEK

LEADER RESOURCES

LIFE GROUP PARTICIPANT COVENANT

A life group is a community of disciples intent on loving God, loving others, and making disciples in order to connect people to Jesus.

We are a community: As the family of God, we meet regularly to eat, pray and share life together. Community is the place where transformation into Jesus' likeness happens best.

We are disciples: As disciples of Jesus we make it our aim to be with Jesus, become like Jesus, and do what Jesus did. Through practice, teaching, community, and guidance of the Holy Spirit, we are learning what it means to love God, love others, and make disciples as apprentices of Jesus.

We want to connect people to Jesus: As people with a purpose in the Kingdom of God, we seek to proclaim and manifest the good news of Jesus and do justice in our community so that our message is grounded in words and deeds. We partner with God by giving out time, talents, and resources to see the Kingdom of God come in Indianapolis as it is in heaven.

Knowing that there are seasons and times for flexibility, in order to accomplish our goal of transformation into Christlikeness we are asking every life group participant to commit to:

- Attending your life group weekly (even when it gets tough!)
- Reflecting on the daily devotional material to enhance group time and contributing to group discussion based on the sermons
- Practice being with Jesus, becoming like Jesus, and doing what Jesus did
- Live and champion the seven rhythms of Rooted
- Being vulnerable and authentic
- Caring for your group members
- Speaking the truth in love and humbly receive loving accountability
- Pursuing emotional and relational health

Confidentiality

Everything in group is to be kept confidential, but according to Indiana law^[1], we do have a duty to report abuse or neglect of a person whether they are a child or an adult. If you feel like harm is going to happen to any individual let a minister on staff at The Creek know. In addition, information may be shared for the express purpose of resource recommendations, accountability, discipleship, or for legal and safety reasons.

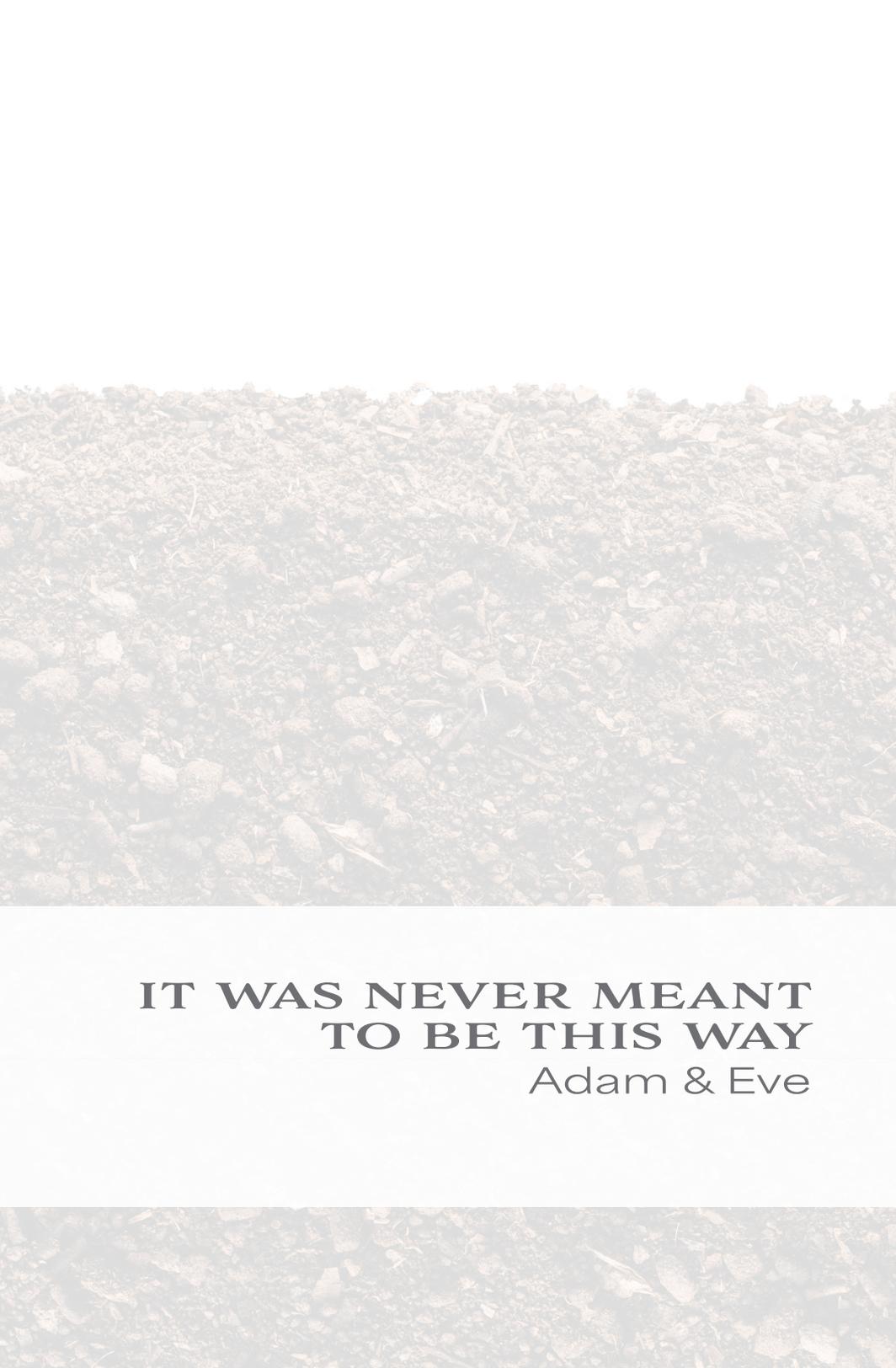
I hereby understand and commit to upholding the expectations laid out for life group participants at The Creek and I commit myself to being and making disciples of Jesus.

SIGNED: _____ DATE: / /

[1] Indiana Code 31-33-5-1, Indiana Code 12-10-3-9(a) and 12-10-3-2(a)

W E E K

01



**IT WAS NEVER MEANT
TO BE THIS WAY**

Adam & Eve



Scan the code on pg. 15 to listen to an audio version of this practice.

Preparing for the practice

When sin entered Eden, God pursued the man and woman, asking them where they were as they hid. Today he asks us the same question, “Where are you?”

When using the a GPS navigation system, your current location is needed in order to see where you want to go. The same is true for the direction of our life with God. The purpose of this exercise is to notice your current location. Where have you been recently? What has occupied your body, mind, and heart? What might God want to reveal to you about it?

You’ll need paper and pen. Go at your own pace, lingering where you need to slow down.

Beginning the practice

As you begin, engage in this centering activity: slow down, take a few deep breaths, and read Psalm 139:1-6, 23-24.

*You have searched me, Lord, and you know me.
You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.
You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.
Before a word is on my tongue, you, Lord, know it completely.
You hem me in behind and before,
and you lay your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.
Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.*

Read it once more in the Passion translation.

*Lord, you know everything there is to know about me.
You perceive every movement of my heart and soul,
and you understand my every thought
before it even enters my mind.
You are so intimately aware of me, Lord.
You read my heart like an open book
and you know all the words I'm about to speak
before I even start a sentence!
You know every step I will take
before my journey even begins.
You've gone into my future to prepare the way,
and in kindness you follow behind me
to spare me from the harm of my past.
With your hand of love upon my life,
you impart a blessing to me.
This is just too wonderful, deep, and incomprehensible!
Your understanding of me brings me wonder and strength.
God, I invite your searching gaze into my heart.
Examine me through and through;
find out everything that may be hidden within me.
Put me to the test and sift through all my anxious cares.
See if there is any path of pain I'm walking on,
and lead me back to your glorious, everlasting ways—
the path that brings me back to you.*

As you begin, invite the Lord to show you where your mind, emotions, and body have been the past few days. Think through a designated period of time—the last three days, the last week, the last month.

STEP 1

“Lord, give me the grace to know where I have been.” Lord, give me the grace to notice the preoccupations of our mind over the last few days or weeks.

In this period of time, what has dominated your thoughts? What has kept your mind preoccupied? Where have you found your thoughts wandering to?

Pause and consider. Take some time to write down one-word answers or phrases.

Lord, give me the grace to notice the feelings I’ve experienced lately, even now in this moment.

In this period of time, what are the principal emotions you have felt? Keep in mind that many people name thoughts... take time to name feelings.

Pause and consider. Take some time to write down one-word answers or phrases.

Lord, help me to notice what it’s like to be in my body, even now in this moment.

In this period of time, what have you noticed in your body? Is there any tension or dis-ease in your body? Are there any sensations you’ve been aware of? What have you noticed in your body?

Pause and consider. Take some time to write down one-word answers or phrases.

Lord, remind me of what I have longed for in the quiet moments.

When you are quiet, what do you find yourself longing for the most? Write down your response.

STEP 2

Take a moment to stop. To listen. To really hear what you just said... read over your answers three times slowly. As you do, notice what stands out to you. How are you answering the Lord's question, "Where are you?"

STEP 3

Write your observations.

STEP 4

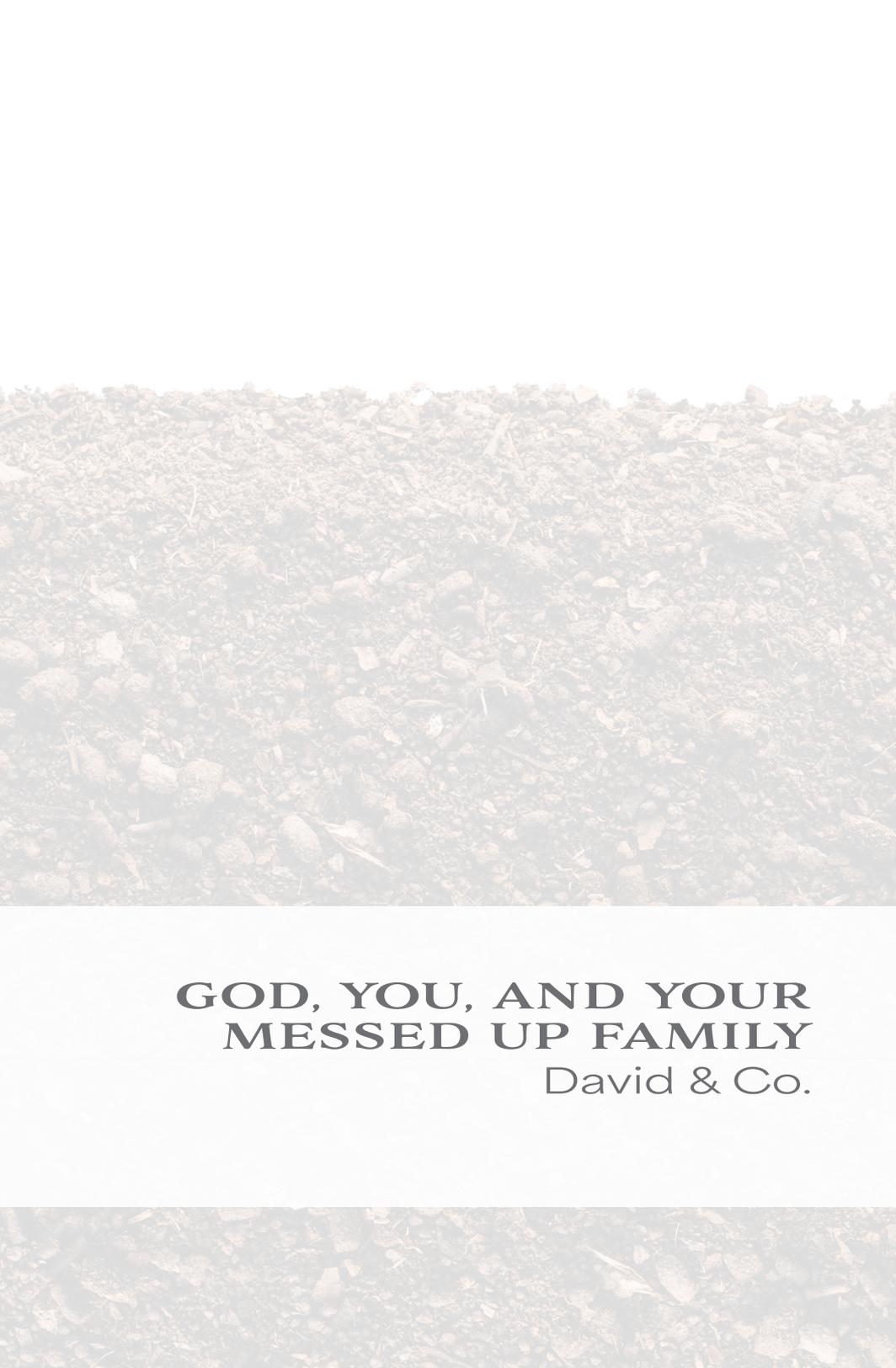
Take a few moments to turn to the Lord. What do you sense the Lord inviting you to? Write that answer and a prayer in response.

follow the QR code for
a podcast conversation on
this week's topic



W E E K

0 2



**GOD, YOU, AND YOUR
MESSED UP FAMILY**

David & Co.

02 | GENOGRAM EXERCISE

When we look at King David's life, we can see the impact that our messed up family can have on us -- his brothers didn't want him around, his sons made terrible decisions that wrecked him emotionally, and he made decisions that damaged his family. But we also see David's heart growing closer to God because of (or perhaps in spite of) his messed up family.

When completing this genogram, it's important to remember that God can heal and use any situation you discover in your family. Do this in his presence, as an act of prayer, committing yourself to forgiveness and gratitude even as you map the painful parts of your history. And if parts of your past are too painful, consider pausing and asking who you can ask to help you process.

We look at our families, not to find fault, but to get a realistic picture of what unhealthy patterns might be blocking our growth and maturing in Christ. We're not focusing on our positive legacies in this exercise due to time limitations.

STEP 1

To begin, find a pen or pencil.

STEP 2

Plot out your family tree back to your grandparents or your great-grandparents on the chart on the next page. Make sure you include all the relationships involved in just three generations. Include your aunts and uncles, cousins, siblings, etc.

follow the QR code for
a podcast conversation on
this week's topic



STEP 3

Complete the following questions through the eyes of your childhood (8 to 12 years old):

1. Next to each family member (parents, grandparents, siblings, and children) write down 2-3 adjectives describing them.
2. On the lines between your parents, describe their marriage(s). Describe your grandparents' marriage(s), and then your own marriage (in 2-3 words and if applicable).
3. Use the symbols from the chart below to describe the relationships between your family members.

Distant/Poor: Low or minimal emotional connection between family members.

Cutoff/Estranged: Family members avoid communication or contact.

Conflict: Issues don't get resolved.

Enmeshed: Pressure is created for family members to think, feel, and act alike. For example, you are expected to attend a family event and you do so in order not to deal with someone else's disapproval.

Abuse: Severe crossing of personal boundaries, injuring the dignity and humanity of another – whether it be sexual, emotional, or physical.

4. On the right side of your paper, note generational themes. Some examples could be addictions, affairs, losses, abuse, divorces, depression, mental illness, abortions, children born out of wedlock, etc.
5. Beneath that, note “earthquake events” in your family history. These are events that significantly impacted the family like premature deaths, abuse, suicide, war, cancer, business collapse, affairs, immigration from another country, etc.

From Explore Your Genogram: Become Leaders who Go Back to Go Forward
by Pete Scazzero as part of the Team Transformation Video Series.

STEP 4

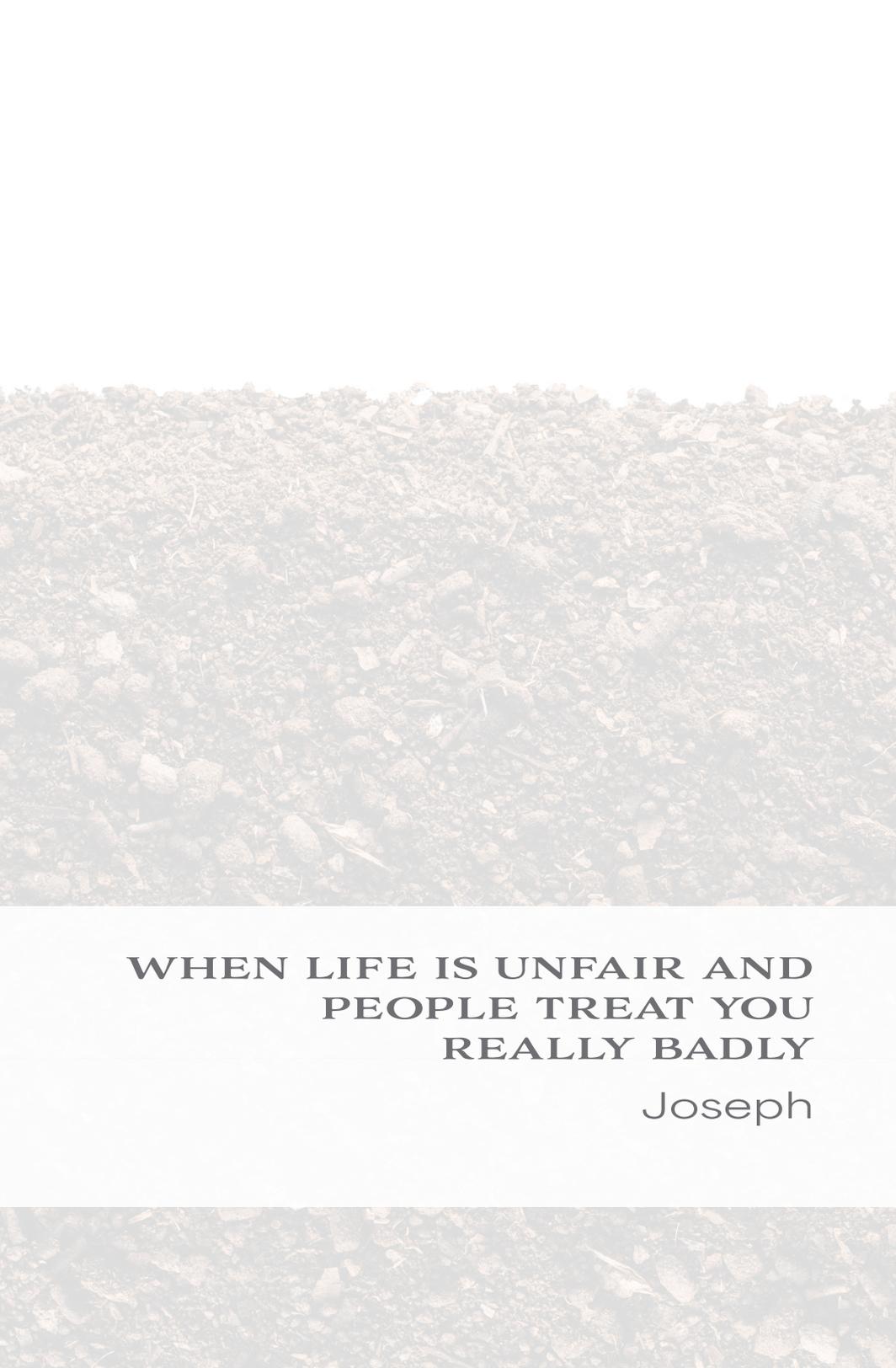
Reflect on your family history with the following questions.

What stands out to you now that you've plotted all your family history? Do you notice any themes? Any patterns?

Are there any ways in which those things that stand out to you might have impacted who you are today? Explain.

W E E K

03



**WHEN LIFE IS UNFAIR AND
PEOPLE TREAT YOU
REALLY BADLY**

Joseph



O1

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- In his book *Forgive*, Timothy Keller writes that in the act of forgiveness, someone always pays the price. Either you withhold forgiveness and the perpetrator pays the price of wronging you, or you offer forgiveness and so you must take the suffering on yourself. When have you seen this dynamic of forgiveness at play in your own life? Write down one example.

- When Jesus went to the cross for the “forgiveness of sins,” he voluntarily paid the price of our wrongdoing. What does the forgiveness God offers mean to you? Write out a few sentences on that reality.

- How does God’s forgiveness to you give you the power to forgive others?

This forgiveness practice is based on P. Brian Noble's "Peacemaker" curriculum. When life is unfair and people treat us badly it's easy to want to hold onto our grudges and withhold forgiveness.

Ephesians 4:32 says, "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

Use the following steps below to help you do just that.

STEP 1

Remember God's willingness to forgive you.

We must remember that, in Christ Jesus, God forgives us.

Read Isaiah 1:18.

Read Isaiah 44:22.

Read Psalm 103:12.

Fill in the first blank below with your name. In the second and third blanks, write "me." Finally, in the fourth blank, write "my."

*In Christ Jesus, through his death, burial, and resurrection,
God forgives _____ of all sin and wrongdoing.
Through this forgiveness, God draws _____ to
Himself, God removes sin from _____ so that it is as far
as the east is from the west, and God chooses to remember
_____ sins no more.*

STEP 2

Remember God's willingness to forgive the other person.

We must remember that, in Christ Jesus, God forgives others - even the people that wrong us.

Re-Read Isaiah 1:18 (with the other person in mind).

Re-Read Isaiah 44:22 (with the other person in mind).

Re-Read Psalm 103:12 (with the other person in mind).

Again, fill in the blanks below. In the first and second blanks, write the name of the person you need to forgive. In the remaining blanks, write “him” or “her.”

In Christ Jesus, through his death, burial, and resurrection, God forgives _____ of all sin and wrongdoing. Through this forgiveness, God draws _____ to Himself, God removes sin from _____ so that it is as far as the east is from the west, and God chooses to remember _____ sins no more.

STEP 3
Make a forgiveness plan.

Forgiveness is not a feeling; it’s an action. Use the following questions and prompts to help you forgive should you find yourself needing to do so.

Remember, God places a short time frame on anger. He does not withhold forgiveness from us so we are invited to not withhold forgiveness from others.

In the space below, write out the name(s) of the person(s) you are extending forgiveness to:

What are you forgiving him/her/them for?

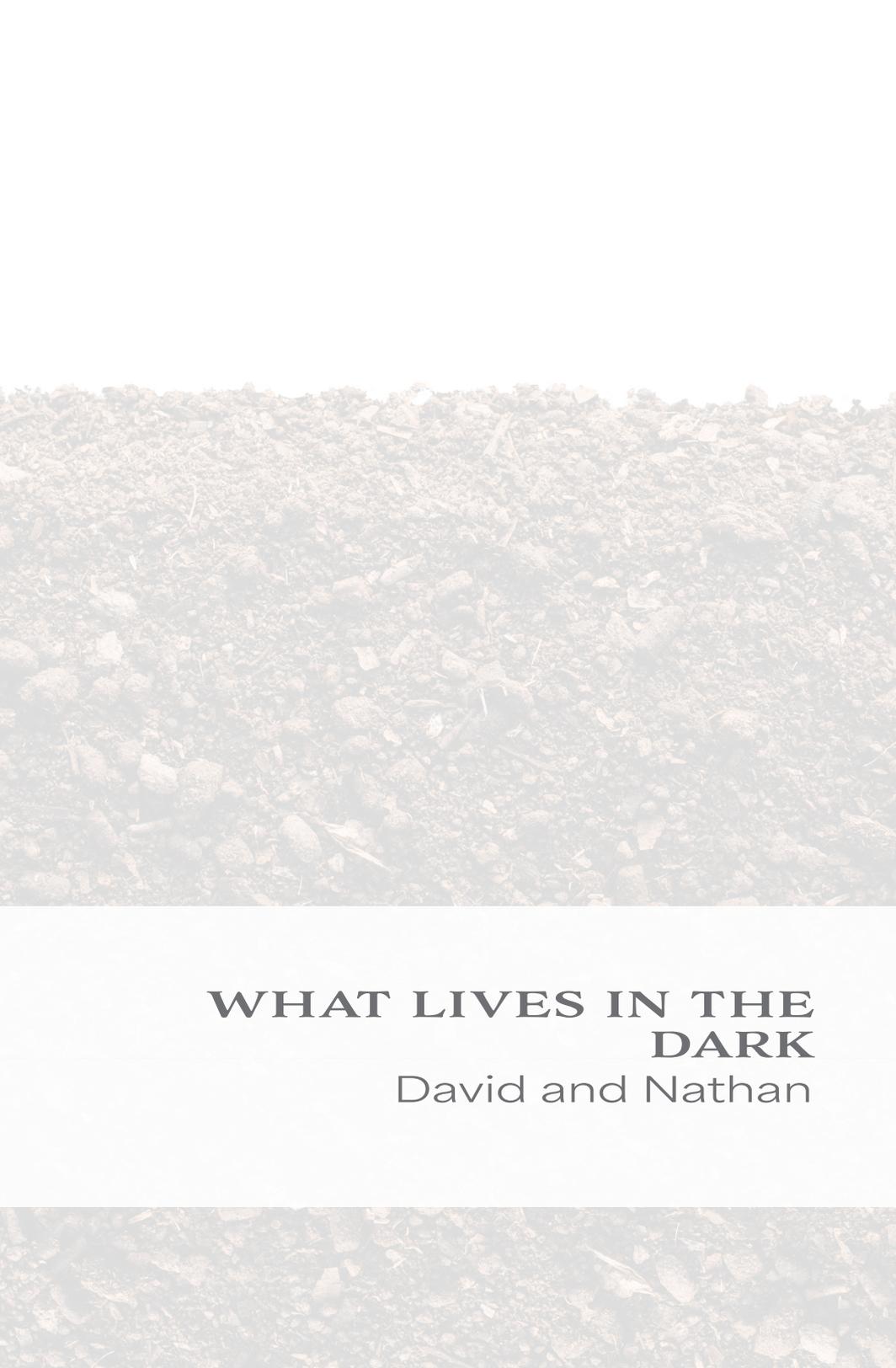
Write out the date you’re handing these people and this situation over to God to be the judge (Romans 12:19):

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W E E K

04



**WHAT LIVES IN THE
DARK**

David and Nathan



01 REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Honesty is a quality that everyone desires in others. We want it in our bosses, in our friend circles, and in our families. However, we rarely stop to be honest with ourselves. We typically see ourselves as the heroes, victims, or somewhere “good” in-between. Without honesty we will change our decisions, our sin, and our bad intentions into justified ones. But honesty is hard to ignore. We may try to cover it or keep it in the dark, but the psalmist says it will eventually eat at us and ‘rot our bones’ (Psalm 32:3).

Has there been an event or decision you can remember that you felt like you couldn’t shake or that you’ve felt you’ve covered up? How did that make you feel? Write down your thoughts below.

Maybe one of our biggest fears when it comes to our faith is the answer to the question: How does God respond when we’re not honest with ourselves and keep things in the dark?

He responds in perfect love. God sent his only son Jesus to shine a light in our darkness. It’s not a light of being found out, but a light that leads to freedom - a light of being fully known and fully loved. God already knows everything about you, and he wants you to bring it to the light for your own sake.

Think back to a time when you had to confess a secret you were keeping. Maybe it was something small like breaking a household item as a kid or maybe it was something more significant later in life. How did you feel when you confessed it? Even when there were consequences, did you feel lighter? Freer? Remind yourself of that feeling.

02 CONFESSION

Confession is simply a way of both bringing ourselves into the light and allowing the light to shine in our darkness. Confession is about being honest with ourselves, and honesty finds its foundation in the truth. Jesus promises that the truth will set you free, and He is the truth (Jn. 8:32, Jn. 14:6).

STEP 1

Find a mirror in a private place.

STEP 2

Look at yourself in the mirror (seriously). Don't close your eyes. Don't look away. Simply gaze into your own eyes.

STEP 3

Imagine the Creator of all of the universe looking at you. He sees you. He knows you. He loves you.

STEP 4

Read the follow truths from scripture:

“You, Lord, are forgiving and good,
abounding in love to all who call to you.”
Psalm 86:5

“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we
were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
Romans 5:8

“Before they call I will answer;
while they are still speaking I will hear.”
Isaiah 65:24

STEP 5

Trusting in his promises, begin to confess what's going on inside your heart. Don't hold back; he not only can handle it, but he wants to take it. Down to the core of bones, let it out. Ask for his forgiveness. He sees you, he hears you, and he forgives you.

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a podcast conversation on
this week's topic



W E E K

05



UNSEEN & UNLOVED

Hagar and Leah



O 2 | THE PRACTICE OF BEING KNOWN

The Practice of Being known is an opportunity to stop and pay attention to God's presence. Curt Thompson has extensively researched the intersection of neurobiology and spiritual formation and introduces the Practice of Being Known in his book, *Anatomy of the Soul*. The meditation exercise is based on Jesus' baptism in Luke 3.

Thompson suggests that when practiced regularly, the exercise engages the neural networks of the brain in a way that can lead to a deeper awareness of being known and cared for by your heavenly Father. The exercise takes just a few minutes and can be done anywhere you are able to pause, be quiet, and fix your gaze on God.

To listen to a recording that will guide you through the Practice of Being Known, follow the QR code or go to thecreek.org/unearthed



WHO I AM IN CHRIST

One way to anchor your life in biblical truths is by memorizing scripture. When we memorize scriptures that remind us who we are in Christ, it becomes harder to believe messages that would have us believe differently.

- Slowly read through the truths and accompanying scripture that follow.
- Underline anything that stands out to you.
- Re-read the scriptures again and see where God draws your attention.
- Commit to memorize the scripture that you are drawn to. If you're new to memorizing scripture, here are some tips:
 - Write it on a note card and keep it somewhere you'll see it several times a day.
 - Read the scripture out loud and then recite it in your own words. This allows you to focus on the meaning of the scripture.
 - Write the scripture out
 - Download a Bible memory app on your phone

I am a child of God.

“Jesus came into the very world he created, but the world didn’t recognize him. He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.” (John 1:10-12 NLT)

I have been bought with a price. I belong to God.

“You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price (1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NLT).”

“Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are mine. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. Others were given in exchange for you. I traded their lives for yours because you are precious to me. You are honored, and I love you.” (Isaiah 43:1, 3-4 NLT)

I have been adopted as God’s child.

“Long before he laid down earth’s foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love. Long, long ago he decided to adopt us into his family through Jesus Christ. (What pleasure he took in planning this!) He wanted us to enter into the celebration of his lavish gift-giving by the hand of his beloved Son.” (Ephesians 1:4-6 MSG)

I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins.

“For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins.” (Colossians 1:13-14 NLT)

I am complete in Christ.

“For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body. So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority. For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead.” (Colossians 2:9-10, 12)

I cannot be separated from the love of God.

“I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38-39 NLT)

I have not been given a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, love and a sound mind.

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord. With the strength God gives you, be ready to suffer for the sake of the Good News.” (2 Timothy 1:7-8)

I am God’s workmanship and am wonderfully made.

“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago (Ephesians 2:10 NLT).”

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.” (Psalms 139:13-16)

I may approach God with freedom and confidence.

“In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.” (Ephesians 3:12 NLT)

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” (Hebrews 4:15-16 NLT)

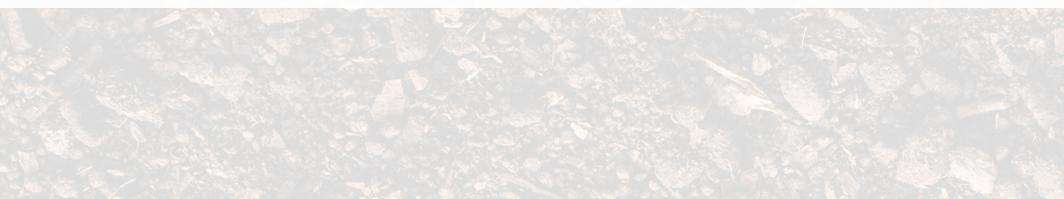
W E E K

0 6



**JUST STRAIGHT
SELFISH**

Jonah



O2 | PRACTICE

Philippians 2:3-4 says, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."

God gave us this principle through his word and later gave us the ultimate example in Jesus putting the needs of others above his own on the cross. Consider for a moment how to shift your perspective away from selfishness - how can I forget my own needs and desires by looking to others? How can I express gratitude and love to others through my actions?

The challenge: Forget Ebenezer Scrooge from *A Christmas Carol* - this won't be a miraculous, overnight change. Start simple. Every morning for the next week, ask your spouse, your roommate, or your colleague, "What can I do for you today?" Then do it. Talk to God about what this is like for you. What changes are you noticing?

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week's topic



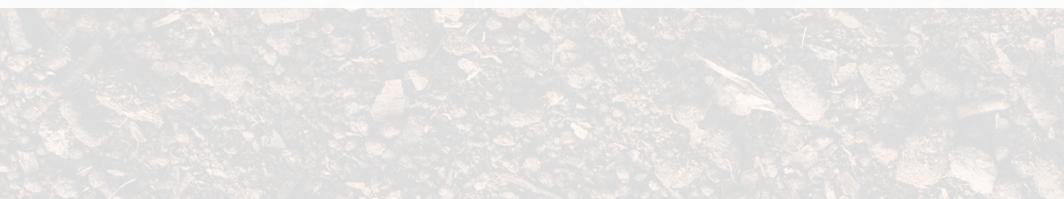
W E E K

07



**PARALYZED
BY FEAR**

Elijah



01 REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Think about a mountain-top experience you've had with God. What was the result of that experience? Think of a valley you've walked through with God (or perhaps seemingly without God). What was the result of that experience?

- When have you felt crippling fear? Did you sense God meeting you in that fear? What might he want to say to you today about that experience and his presence?

- In response to Elijah's fear, God fed him, reminded him of his purpose, and told him that he wasn't alone. How is God caring for you today, especially if you're feeling fear or anxiety?

O2 | FEAR MAPPING

When Elijah found himself in a valley (literally and figuratively) after confronting the prophets of a false god, he felt alone and afraid. God showed up in the valley to care for Elijah, teach him who he is, and remind Elijah who he is in him. We're going to use that encounter in 1 Kings 19 as the basis of this week's practice.

First, take a few deep breaths to slow yourself and become aware of God's love and attention to you.

In 1 Kings 19:4, Elijah prayed, "I have had enough, Lord," then fell asleep. Spend a few minutes naming those areas where you've had enough: fears, overwhelming work, overbooked calendar, sin patterns or habits, difficult relationships, etc. After naming those things in your journal, spend a moment resting, sitting quietly with your list. Does anything else come to the surface?

In verse 9, Elijah finds himself in a cave, where God comes and asks, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" Now as you look over your list, hear God ask you the same question. Use this time to share honestly and vulnerably with God. Tell him what seems unfair, tell him what you're trying to do. Look at each item and talk about what you're afraid of.

In verses 11-13, God's presence shows up on the mountain. There's a tornado, an earthquake, and a fire, but God wasn't in any of those. God comes in a whisper, gentle and low. And in a whisper, God asks the same question: "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

Hear the whisper of God and see how he wants to meet you. Look over your list of fears and overwhelming circumstances. Feel God's gentleness as you name each one. Picture holding each one in your hands and letting go of it. Journal about what his gentleness reveals to you in those situations. Where is he and where are you in relation to him? How does that change the circumstances?

Finally, God reminds Elijah in verse 18 that he is not alone, then he sends him to find a friend—someone who will go on the journey with him.

It takes courage to release fears and feelings of overwhelm. Ask God to reveal a friend that can walk the journey with you and offer encouragement as you go.

Take a few more deep breaths and thank God for meeting you in your valleys and for never leaving or forsaking you.

follow the QR code for a
podcast conversation on this
week's topic



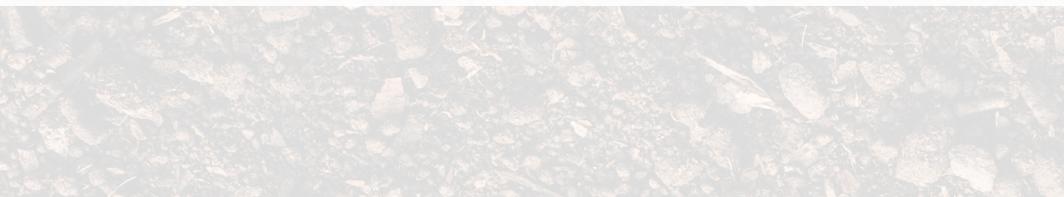
W E E K

0 8



**FROM SUCCESS
TO FAILURE**

Gideon



O1

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- **Read Philippians 2:5-11.** Define, in your own words, what you learn about humility according to this passage.

- When has pride gotten the better of you? How have you seen it mess with the quality of your life? Jot down at least one experience.

- When has humility improved your life? Describe that experience in the provided space.

02 PRACTICE

John Wesley, a follower of Jesus, preacher, and writer, had an immense impact on how people think about the spiritual life.

While Wesley was pastoring, he led a group called the “Holy Club.” Despite the pompous name, the goal was simply for those who met in this “Holy Club” to try to live humble and holy lives.

To do so, they asked each other a series of questions every time they met.

Take a few moments to honestly, prayerfully answer the questions below:

- 01 Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am better than I really am? In other words, am I a hypocrite?

- 02 Am I honest in all my acts and words, or do I exaggerate?

- 03 Do I confidentially pass on to another what was told to me in confidence?

- 04 Can I be trusted?

- 05 Am I a slave to dress, friends, work, or habits?

- 06 Am I self-conscious, self-pitying, or self-justifying?

- 07 Did the Bible live in me today?

- 08 Do I give it time to speak to me everyday?
- 09 Am I enjoying prayer?
- 10 When did I last speak to someone else about my faith?
- 11 Do I pray about the money I spend?
- 12 Do I get to bed on time and get up on time?
- 13 Do I disobey God in anything?
- 14 Do I insist upon doing something about which my conscience is uneasy?
- 15 Am I defeated in any part of my life?
- 16 Am I jealous, impure, critical, irritable, touchy, or distrustful?
- 17 How do I spend my spare time?
- 18 Am I proud?

- 19 Do I thank God that I am not as other people, especially as the Pharisees who despised the publican?
- 20 Is there anyone whom I fear, dislike, disown, criticize, hold a resentment toward or disregard?

If so, what am I doing about it?

- 21 Do I grumble or complain constantly?
- 22 Is Christ real to me?

After you've finished, write out a prayer to God where you noticed pride in your heart and where you need the humility of Jesus.

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W E E K

09



**HOW TO LOSE
EVERYTHING**

Samson



Fasting is intentional self-denial of normal necessities in order to intentionally attend to God in prayer. Bringing attachments and cravings to the surface opens a place for prayer. The physical emptiness is a reminder to turn to Jesus who alone can satisfy. Fasting is an elimination of good things that have become too important.

The practice of fasting traditionally means abstaining from food, but there may be other behaviors that God is inviting you to fast from. Read the following scripture a few times and ask God to reveal to you where you have allowed behaviors to leave you exposed, leading to sin and destruction. **What are you allowing in your wall?**

“A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.” Proverbs 25:28

- Prayerfully identify a behavior to abstain from. Ask God to show you what is drawing your attention away from him. Some examples could be: food, drink, sweets, social media, TV, or video games.
- Choose a period of time to fast from that behavior. *When fasting from food, many choose to fast from the morning and midday meals, breaking their fast with the evening meal.*
- Mark the start of your fast by being still and bringing your desires before the Lord. Invite him to show you how to shift your gaze back to him when you experience urges to engage in the behavior that you’re fasting from. Trust that he will meet your needs throughout your fast.

Just like someone who is abstaining from junk food might pack some healthy snacks to eat when they're hungry, it's important to prepare some ways to engage with the Lord when you are drawn to the behavior you're fasting from. This practice is meant to refocus our attention on God. Scripture is a powerful tool to have on hand (or in mind). Choose a psalm to focus on or one of the gospels. Consider focusing on one of the following passages:

- Isaiah 58:1-14
- John 6:48-50
- Luke 4:1-13
- Luke 6:21
- Psalm 73:25-26

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W E E K

10



**FINDING GOD IN
THE DARK**

Job

01 REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What losses have you experienced throughout your life? How have they affected you?

- As you look back on the hardships of your life, where do you see God's presence with and attentiveness to you? How is looking back on the loss different than when you were first experiencing it?

- How have you compensated for the loss you experienced? Were there things you sought for comfort or ways you avoided grieving?

- Where is forgiveness needed as you examine your suffering with God?

- What scriptures remind you that God has walked this valley with you?

*“Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat fall to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds”
(John 12:24)*

Making sense of loss and hardship is a challenging part of following Jesus. We can know that God is good while also living in difficulty that makes that reality hard to believe. We read scriptures like “all things God works for the good of those who love him” (Romans 8:28) and wonder how that applies to our own loss, especially when we’re still grieving.

Thankfully, we have a Savior who is familiar with suffering, loss, and hardship. Jesus encountered every kind of emotion we face. On the cross, he left us an invitation to process the truth of the goodness of the new life only he can bring.

In his book *The Holy Longing*, Ronald Rolheiser explains there are two types of death. “There is terminal death and paschal death. Terminal death is a death that ends all possibilities...Paschal death is a death that, while ending one kind of life, opens the person undergoing it to receive a deeper and richer form of life.” This is the kind of life Jesus refers to in John 12:24. While the kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it produces new life through its death.

Rolheiser also distinguishes between two types of life. He shares, “There is resuscitated life and there is resurrected life. Resuscitated life is when one is restored to one’s former life and health, as is the case with someone who has been clinically dead and is brought back to life.

Resurrected life is not this. It is not a restoration of one’s old life but the reception of a radically new life.”

Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection are known as the Paschal Mystery for this very reason. Jesus’ death on the cross was not a terminal death. While it was final in the sense of fulfilling the law, his death brought new life with it. That new life isn’t the same as the old life before. When we meet Jesus, he brings resurrected life—life that is radically new.

As we enter another practice this week, we're invited to look at our losses, grieve them, and open our hands to the new life Jesus longs to bring. Rolheiser writes, "unless we mourn properly our hurts, our losses, life's unfairness, our shattered dreams, our radical inconsummation, and all the life that we once had but that has now passed us by, we will live either in an unhealthy fantasy or an ever-intensifying bitterness."

STEP 1

Preparing for the practice

Take a few moments to read through the stages of Christ's death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. Imagine what it would have been like to experience these events in real time with his disciples.

The "paschal cycle" of Christ might be explained in this way:

Good Friday

the loss of life, real death

On Good Friday we witness Christ's death. His real death on the cross. The disciples would have most assuredly grieved and mourned the loss of Jesus.

Holy Saturday

waiting for new life in death

While it's easy on this side of history to see the new life that came as a result of Jesus' resurrection, there was a day of waiting for the new life to begin.

Easter Sunday

the reception of new life

Christ rose again and it wasn't a resuscitated life. It was a resurrected one. He didn't come back in the same form as he had been. The life he breathed was radically different.

The Forty Days

a time for adjustment to the new and grieving the old

After Jesus rose from the dead, he spent time with his disciples explaining (as best they could understand) what was to come. He promised to not leave them alone and gave them directions of how to move forward. These Forty Days allowed them to adjust.

Ascension

letting go of the old and letting it bless you, the refusal to cling

Jesus told his followers that if he stayed, the Comforter (Holy Spirit) couldn't come (John 16:7). They had to let him go, refusing to cling to the person of Jesus as they had known him in the flesh so the Spirit could come.

Pentecost

the reception of the new spirit for the new life that is already being lived

On the day of Pentecost, they were filled with the Holy Spirit just as Jesus promised (Acts 1-2). The new life they'd been waiting for was here.

STEP 2

Entering the practice

Take a few moments to quiet yourself before Jesus. Invite him to show you if there is a particular place of loss or grief that needs to be processed in the lens of his sacrifice. Pray, trusting him to hold your hurt.

As you're ready, walk through the following steps with God guiding you.

Good Friday

the loss of life, real death

Name your deaths. What loss(es) need to be named here? What is the real loss you'd like to name in the presence of Christ?

Holy Saturday

waiting for new life in death

Where are you still waiting to see the new life Jesus has promised? Where has it been hard to wait? Carry those answers to Jesus.

Easter Sunday

the reception of new life

Claim your births. What resurrected life is Jesus offering to you? What new life has come because of this loss? If you're still struggling to see this new life, invite God to show you a glimpse of it. Have you claimed these new births?

The Forty Days

a time for adjustment to the new and grieving the old

Grieve what you've lost and adjust to the new reality. Adjusting to the new reality will require different things depending on the loss you're processing with God. God isn't in a hurry. Invite him to show you how you can grieve well and where you can adjust to the new life he is bringing.

Ascension

letting go of the old and letting it bless you, the refusal to cling

Do not cling to the old, let it ascend and give you its blessing. It wouldn't be a loss if it was hard to let go. How was your life blessed by what you're grieving? Take some time to bring your gratitude to God for those gifts. Ask him to help you let go to make room for the new life he's bringing.

Pentecost

the reception of the new spirit for the new life that is already being lived

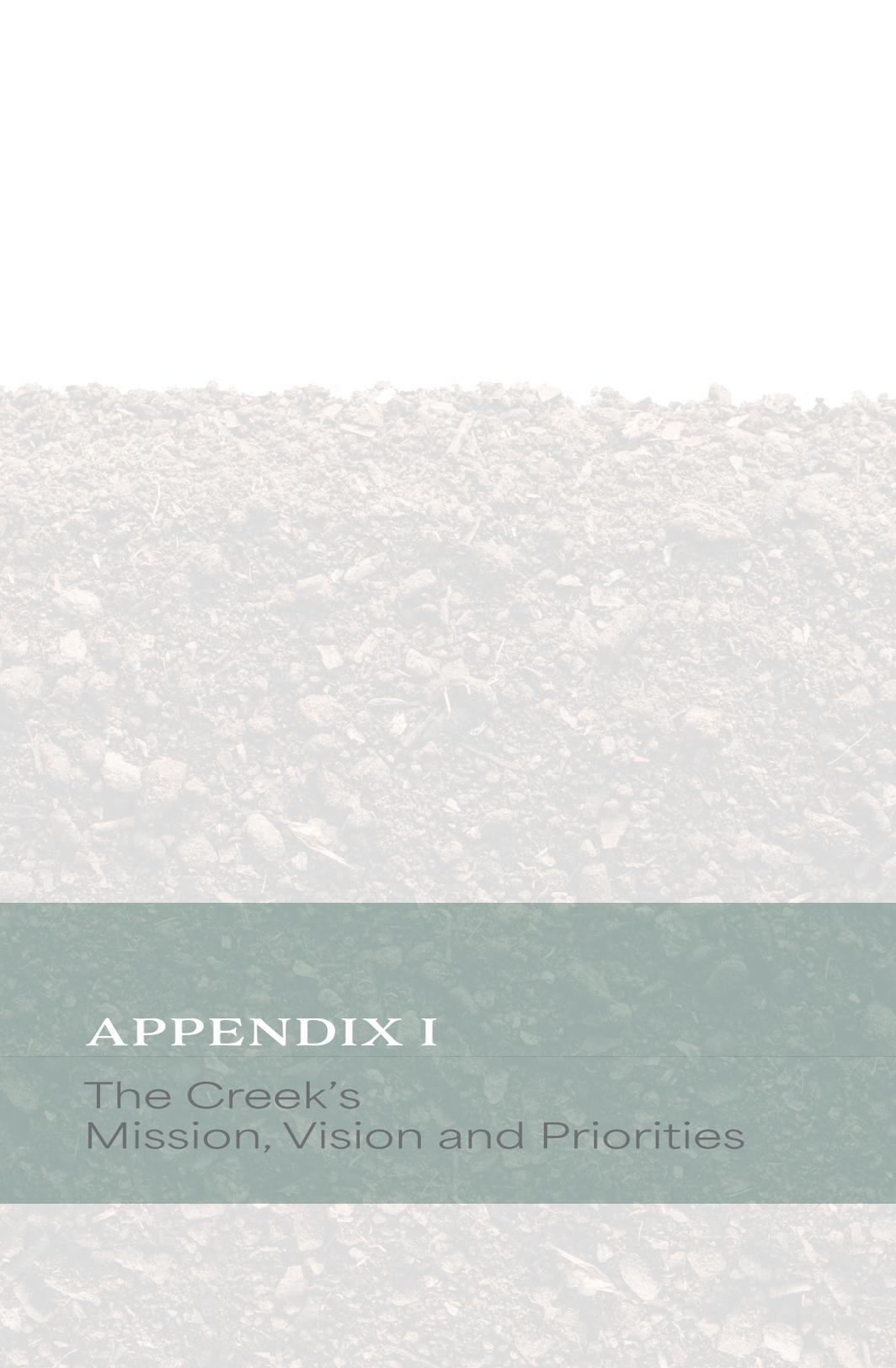
Accept the spirit of the life that you are, in fact, living. God is in the business of resurrecting things. What is the new life he is offering to you as a result of this loss? Where are you reluctant to step into it? Pray for the courage, wisdom, and grace to walk into the new life God offers. Invite him to help in the process.

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APPENDICES





APPENDIX I

The Creek's
Mission, Vision and Priorities

MISSION

Love God, Love People, Make Disciples

VISION

Connecting people to Jesus

PRIORITIES

WORSHIP | “All for the glory of God”

We seek God’s presence and honor in everything we do.

GOSPEL | “Jesus Christ is Lord”

We proclaim the good news of Jesus and center our lives on his teaching and example.

KINGDOM | “As it is in heaven”

We desire to see the fame and deeds of God renewed in our day in Indianapolis and around the world.

SCRIPTURE | “Inspired and alive”

We delight in God’s Word and live it out on a daily basis.

IDENTITY | “Children of God”

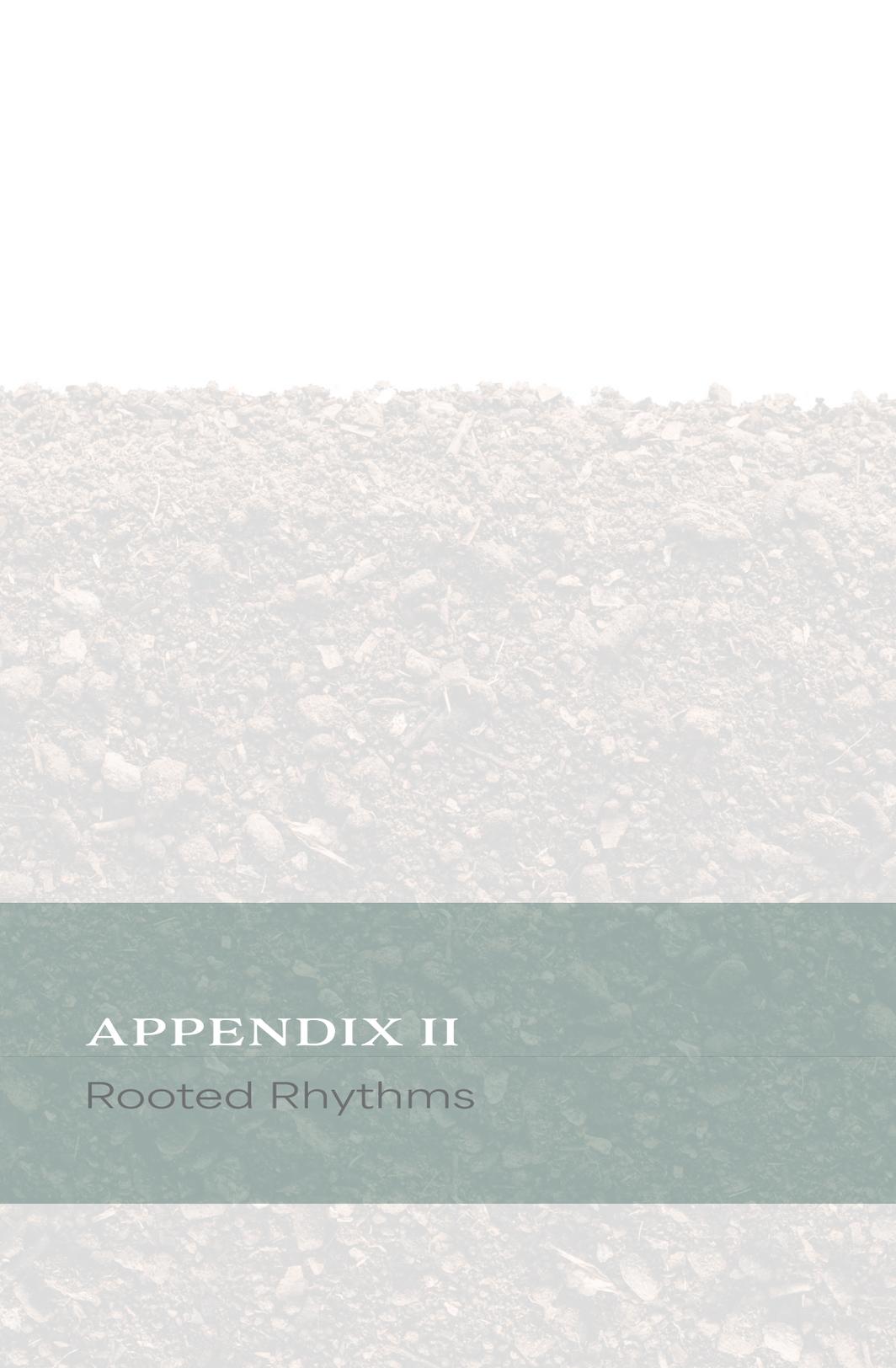
We receive God’s love and embrace our adoption as sons and daughters.

COMMUNITY | “Devoted to one another”

We value relationships and build our lives together as family.

GENEROSITY | “More blessed to give”

We share our resources to enrich others and advance God’s kingdom.



APPENDIX II

Rooted Rhythms



**Daily
Devotion**



Prayer



Repentance



**Sacrificial
Generosity**



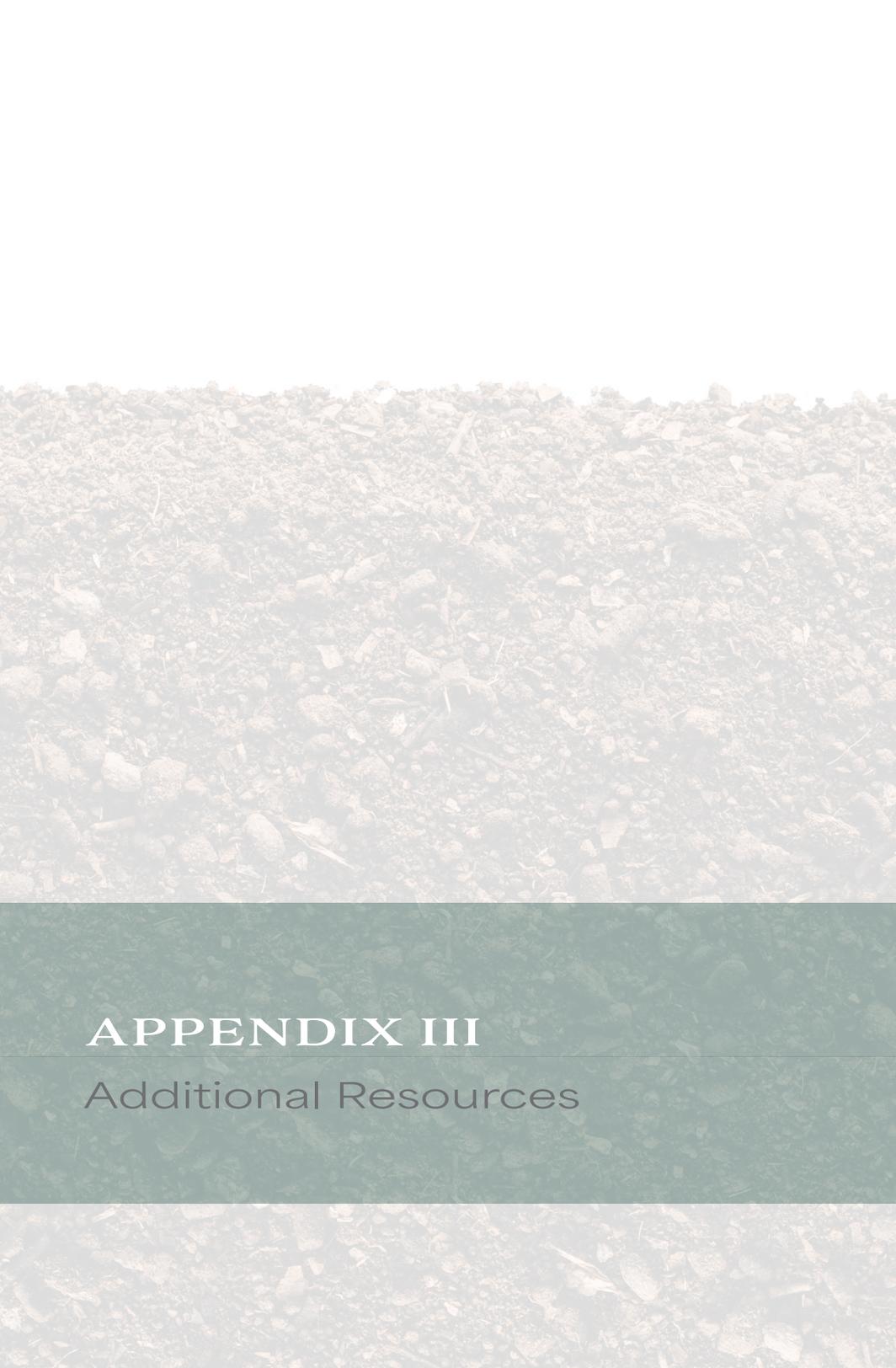
**Serve the
Community**



**Share Your
Story**



Worship



APPENDIX III

Additional Resources

BOOKS & COMMENTARIES

- *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* by Pete Scazzero
- *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* by Adele Calhoun
- *The Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence
- *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster
- *The Body Keeps the Score* by Bessel van der Kolk
- *The Deeply Formed Life* by Rich Villodas
- *Life of the Beloved* by Henri Nouwen
- *Why Emotions Matter* by Tristen Collins

OTHER

www.bibleproject.com

www.practicingtheway.org

SUPPORT & HELP

Care appointments - Care appointments are a one-on-one, one-hour sit-down with a pastor on our staff to receive encouragement, prayer, and resource recommendations. Find out more at thecreek.org/care.

Miscellaneous resources: Visit thecreek.org/care for resources categorized by topic (abuse, depression, divorce, addiction, codependence, and more).

Contact us - For any additional help, email us at contact@thecreek.org.



APPENDIX IV

Serving

SERVING

VOMO is a one-stop shop to find all our serving opportunities. You, your family, and your group can find the volunteer needs from Generosity & Outreach at The Creek and our ministry partners.

These opportunities are updated frequently, so you can have different serving experiences to find the right fit. If you'd like a member of our team to come to one of your meetings to help your group decide what's right for you, email TerriKilgore@thecreek.org.



THE CREEK

