



**CHRIST, CLUTTER, AND THE CALENDAR**  
*Retreat/ Group Companion* WORKBOOK

# CHRIST, CLUTTER, AND THE CALENDAR

*Retreat/ Group Companion*

## WORKBOOK

RICHARD T. CASE





## Acknowledgments

I wish to dedicate this course to and thank all of the leaders of our Ministry: **Ministry: Living Waters—ABIDE Ministries**, along with my wife, Linda, who have all had to process through this consistent life issue of being too busy, not having margin, and burdened by life issues. We have walked together to learn to receive these truths personally, and thus all the time are assisting each other to live in freedom, margin, and experiencing God's best—verses falling into the normal life of Christians where we are trying to do all we can for God; and thinking that more is always better. Because of the dynamics of life, this is a constant issue that is not resolved once and for all—but is a process that has to be engaged all the time. Our leader's practice this, help Linda and I practice this, and then they give it away to their groups and friends who also have to deal with the struggle. Having freedom and margin is such a critical issue for all believers that this course is a required study in order to enjoy the fullness of the life with God. Thank you all for teaching these truths:

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Further, it is a joy for me to share this life with my wife, Linda, and family who together are do hold each other accountable to continue to process these truths in our everyday life—and thus we enjoy the beauty and margin of life intended by God for us.

*CHRIST, CLUTTER, AND THE CALENDAR RETREAT/ COMPANION WORKBOOK*

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# LESSON 1: GOD'S PLAN FOR US TO LIVE THE COVENANT: THE SUPERABUNDANT LIFE; REASONS WHY WE TEND TO WORK AGAINST THIS INTENDED LIFE



**"God sets before us a really simple choice: life or death, blessing or cursing."**

**What choice does God present to us? What is His purpose for this? Why is this such an important truth for our lives? What is described for how are we to make this choice?**

**Read Deuteronomy 30:15–20:**

<sup>15</sup> "See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. <sup>16</sup> If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God<sup>[a]</sup> that I command you today, by loving the LORD your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules,<sup>[b]</sup> then you shall live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. <sup>17</sup> But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, <sup>18</sup> I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish. You shall not live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. <sup>19</sup> I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, <sup>20</sup> loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them."

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# LESSON 1:

## GOD'S PLAN FOR US TO LIVE THE COVENANT: THE SUPERABUNDANT LIFE; REASONS WHY WE TEND TO WORK AGAINST THIS INTENDED LIFE

**Read Romans 8:5–8: What are the three consequences of living in the flesh?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Why is it so important to our life to understand this, and thus be motivated to choose what God laid out for us in Deuteronomy 30?**

### **Read Romans 8:5-8**

<sup>5</sup> For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup> For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. <sup>8</sup> Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

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Read through these verses, and review again what we have previously learned about the seven exceptional characteristics of life as originally designed by God for us. Why is this important for us to receive as we learn that God is going to provide margin for our calendar and resolve our issues of life?

### Read Genesis 1:26–2:25:

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let us make man<sup>[a]</sup> in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

<sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

<sup>28</sup> And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."<sup>29</sup> And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food."<sup>30</sup> And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so.<sup>31</sup> And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

The Seventh Day, God Rests

**2** Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.<sup>2</sup> And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.<sup>3</sup> So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

The Creation of Man and Woman

<sup>4</sup> These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.

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<sup>5</sup> When no bush of the field<sup>[b]</sup> was yet in the land<sup>[c]</sup> and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, <sup>6</sup> and a mist<sup>[d]</sup> was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground— <sup>7</sup> then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. <sup>8</sup> And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. <sup>9</sup> And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

<sup>10</sup> A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. <sup>11</sup> The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. <sup>12</sup> And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. <sup>13</sup> The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. <sup>14</sup> And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

<sup>15</sup> The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. <sup>16</sup> And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, <sup>17</sup> but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat<sup>[e]</sup> of it you shall surely die.”

<sup>18</sup> Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for<sup>[f]</sup> him.” <sup>19</sup> Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed<sup>[g]</sup> every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. <sup>20</sup> The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam<sup>[h]</sup> there was not found a helper fit for him. <sup>21</sup> So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. <sup>22</sup> And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made<sup>[i]</sup> into a woman and brought her to the man. <sup>23</sup> Then the man said,

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"This at last is bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
she shall be called Woman,  
because she was taken out of Man."<sup>[j]</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife,  
and they shall become one flesh. <sup>25</sup> And the man and his wife were both naked  
and were not ashamed.

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**What does God promise regarding restoring to us His abundant life when the life and the circumstances we are experiencing are difficult and oppressive?  
Why is this so important for us to receive and believe?**

### Read Isaiah 61:1–4:

The Year of the LORD'S Favor

**61** The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,  
because the LORD has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor;<sup>[a]</sup>  
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;<sup>[b]</sup>  
<sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of the LORD'S favor,  
and the day of vengeance of our God;  
to comfort all who mourn;  
<sup>3</sup> to grant to those who mourn in Zion—  
to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes,

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the oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit;  
that they may be called oaks of righteousness,  
the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified.<sup>[c]</sup>  
<sup>4</sup> They shall build up the ancient ruins;  
they shall raise up the former devastations;  
they shall repair the ruined cities,  
the devastations of many generations.

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**What can we count on as we consider the life that God has planned for us?  
Why is this so important for us to receive and believe?**

### **Read Jeremiah 29:11–14:**

<sup>11</sup> For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare<sup>[a]</sup> and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. <sup>12</sup> Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. <sup>13</sup> You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. <sup>14</sup> I will be found by you, declares the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

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What is the Covenant that was given to Abraham and still applies to us? What does that mean to us as we face difficulties and burdens of life?

### Read Genesis 12:1-3:

The Call of Abram

**12** Now the LORD said<sup>[a]</sup> to Abram, "Go from your country<sup>[b]</sup> and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup> And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. <sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."<sup>[c]</sup>

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### Read Deuteronomy 28:1-2:

Blessings for Obedience

**28** "And if you faithfully obey the voice of the LORD your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. <sup>2</sup> And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the LORD your God.

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In order to experience the promised blessings as He makes things happen through His authority, what is important for us to understand and live out? Why?

**Read Matthew 28:18–20:**

Blessings for Obedience

**28** “And if you faithfully obey the voice of the LORD your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth.<sup>2</sup> And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the LORD your God.

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Since we live in the world, who is working to cause us to experience difficulties and burdens? Why? What is important for us to understand about this?

**Read John 8:42–44:**

<sup>42</sup> Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. <sup>43</sup> Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. <sup>44</sup> You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

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**How does the enemy scheme to come against us and thwart God's will of providing the abundant, covenant life for us and restoring the things that have been lost, stolen, and ruined?**

### **Read Ephesians 6:10-12:**

The Whole Armor of God

<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

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**What exactly does the enemy appeal to that leads us to “sin” – not follow God? What are the consequences of this if we respond to this appeal? Why is this so easy to fall into?**

**Read James 1:12–15:**

<sup>12</sup> Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. <sup>13</sup> Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. <sup>14</sup> But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. <sup>15</sup> Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

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**What is a key selfish appeal that we all tend to think about and pursue? What is it about this that appeals to us? Why?**

**Read Ecclesiastes 5:10:**

<sup>10</sup> He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity.

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**What happens when we pursue wealth and money as our primary of making decisions? Why is this so difficult to understand and thus so difficult to just follow and trust God?**

**Read Proverbs 20:3–5:**

<sup>3</sup> It is an honor for a man to keep aloof from strife,  
but every fool will be quarreling.

<sup>4</sup> The sluggard does not plow in the autumn;  
he will seek at harvest and have nothing.

<sup>5</sup> The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water,  
but a man of understanding will draw it out.

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**What is another consequence of pursuing riches? Why then is this so important to understand as we alter our view on pursuing riches?**

**Read Proverbs 28:20:**

<sup>20</sup> A faithful man will abound with blessings,  
but whoever hastens to be rich will not go unpunished.

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**What is true about our desire and attempt to serve both God (we all do want to) and money? Why is this consequence so critical to how we live?**

**Read Matthew 6:24:**

<sup>24</sup> "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.<sup>[a]</sup>

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**In what way is pursuing wealth a trap? How does this trap us and cause us more difficulty? Why is this so important to learn?**

**Read 1 Timothy 6:9–10:**

<sup>9</sup> But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. <sup>10</sup> For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

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If we do not seek God's counsel, what are the consequences to us? Why?

**Read Isaiah 30:1-3:**

Do Not Go Down to Egypt

**30** "Ah, stubborn children," declares the Lord,  
"who carry out a plan, but not mine,  
and who make an alliance,<sup>[a]</sup> but not of my Spirit,  
that they may add sin to sin;

<sup>2</sup> who set out to go down to Egypt,  
without asking for my direction,  
to take refuge in the protection of Pharaoh  
and to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt!

<sup>3</sup> Therefore shall the protection of Pharaoh turn to your shame,  
and the shelter in the shadow of Egypt to your humiliation.

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**In what way do we hurry to achieve certain personal goals? What are the consequences of this? Why then is this so important to how we live?**

**Read Proverbs 21:5:**

<sup>5</sup> The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance,  
but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.

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**What is the interesting truth of what happens to us as we seek our own gain and our own solutions? Why is this so critical to learn?**

### **Read Haggai 1:3–11:**

<sup>3</sup> Then the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet, <sup>4</sup> "Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins? <sup>5</sup> Now, therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider your ways. <sup>6</sup> You have sown much, and harvested little. You eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages does so to put them into a bag with holes.

<sup>7</sup> "Thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways. <sup>8</sup> Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified, says the Lord. <sup>9</sup> You looked for much, and behold, it came to little. And when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? declares the LORD of hosts. Because of my house that lies in ruins, while each of you busies himself with his own house. <sup>10</sup> Therefore the heavens above you have withheld the dew, and the earth has withheld its produce. <sup>11</sup> And I have called for a drought on the land and the hills, on the grain, the new wine, the oil, on what the ground brings forth, on man and beast, and on all their labors."

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**What does God reveal to us about trying to get everything done ourselves? Why is this "not good"? What would He have us consider that would help us recapture our energy and our time? Why?**

### Read Exodus 18:1–18:

#### Jethro's Advice

**18** Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel his people, how the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt. <sup>2</sup> Now Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, had taken Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her home, <sup>3</sup> along with her two sons. The name of the one was Gershom (for he said, "I have been a sojourner<sup>[a]</sup> in a foreign land"), <sup>4</sup> and the name of the other, Eliezer<sup>[b]</sup> (for he said, "The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh"). <sup>5</sup> Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness where he was encamped at the mountain of God. <sup>6</sup> And when he sent word to Moses, "I,<sup>[c]</sup> your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her," <sup>7</sup> Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed down and kissed him. And they asked each other of their welfare and went into the tent. <sup>8</sup> Then Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardship that had come upon them in the way, and how the Lord had delivered them. <sup>9</sup> And Jethro rejoiced for all the good that the Lord had done to Israel, in that he had delivered them out of the hand of the Egyptians.

<sup>10</sup> Jethro said, "Blessed be the Lord, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh and has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. <sup>11</sup> Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods, because in this affair they dealt arrogantly with the people."<sup>[d]</sup> <sup>12</sup> And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and sacrifices to God; and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.

<sup>13</sup> The next day Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood around Moses from morning till evening. <sup>14</sup> When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, and all the people stand around you from morning till evening?" <sup>15</sup> And Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God; <sup>16</sup> when they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between one person and another, and I make them know the

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statutes of God and his laws.”<sup>17</sup> Moses' father-in-law said to him, “What you are doing is not good. <sup>18</sup>You and the people with you will certainly wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to do it alone.

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**As we are making choices to follow God, what is important for us to get settled? Why?**

**Read Galatians 1:10:**

<sup>10</sup> For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant<sup>[a]</sup> of Christ.

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# LESSON 1: GOD'S PLAN FOR US TO LIVE THE COVENANT: THE SUPERABUNDANT LIFE; REASONS WHY WE TEND TO WORK AGAINST THIS INTENDED LIFE

What is also important to understand as we follow God? In what ways do we get entangled in other activities? What are the consequences of that?

**Read 2 Timothy 2:4:**

<sup>4</sup> No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.

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**As you consider your life right now, do an evaluation of your life and look at the things of your life and ask the simple question: Am I enjoying it? Do I have margin in my life? Am I trying to figure out my own plans? What are my own timelines and why have I not considered God's way? Am I entangled in things that have not been given to me by my master? As you list these things, in the next sessions, we can begin to ask God to give us His assignments and His wisdom to have us live a life of freedom and joy.**

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# LESSON 2: FURTHER REASONS WHY WE TEND TO WORK AGAINST THIS INTENDED LIFE



**"The enemy is working to keep us away from this blessed life by bringing us too many tasks like chasing money, chasing our own plan, chasing our activity of things that are going to occupy our time."**

**What does God say about our prayer life and answers to prayers if we carry unforgiveness in our hearts? Why is this so important to our relationship and life with God? What then does unforgiveness mean regarding our relationship?**

### **Read Mark 11:20–25:**

The Lesson from the Withered Fig Tree

<sup>20</sup> As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. <sup>21</sup> And Peter remembered and said to him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered." <sup>22</sup> And Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God. <sup>23</sup> Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. <sup>24</sup> Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received<sup>[a]</sup> it, and it will be yours. <sup>25</sup> And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."<sup>[b]</sup>

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# LESSON 2: FURTHER REASONS WHY WE TEND TO WORK AGAINST THIS INTENDED LIFE

What causes us to “fret” and be anxious? What does God say to us regarding why we are called to not fret or be anxious?

## Read Psalm 37:1–8:

He Will Not Forsake His Saints

<sup>[a]</sup> Of David.

**37** Fret not yourself because of evildoers;  
be not envious of wrongdoers!

<sup>2</sup> For they will soon fade like the grass  
and wither like the green herb.

<sup>3</sup> Trust in the LORD, and do good;  
dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.<sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Delight yourself in the LORD,  
and he will give you the desires of your heart.

<sup>5</sup> Commit your way to the LORD;  
trust in him, and he will act.

<sup>6</sup> He will bring forth your righteousness as the light,  
and your justice as the noonday.

<sup>7</sup> Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him;  
fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way,  
over the man who carries out evil devices!

<sup>8</sup> Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath!  
Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.

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# LESSON 2: FURTHER REASONS WHY WE TEND TO WORK AGAINST THIS INTENDED LIFE

**As we focus on circumstances, what is our thinking regarding the likely consequences of these difficulties (how did the spies respond?); and how does this thinking prevent us from moving forward into God’s solution? Why?**

### **Read Numbers 13:30–14:4:**

<sup>30</sup> But Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, “Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it.” <sup>31</sup> Then the men who had gone up with him said, “We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are.” <sup>32</sup> So they brought to the people of Israel a bad report of the land that they had spied out, saying, “The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw in it are of great height. <sup>33</sup> And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim), and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them.”

### The People Rebel

**14** Then all the congregation raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night. <sup>2</sup> And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The whole congregation said to them, “Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! <sup>3</sup> Why is the Lord bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?” <sup>4</sup> And they said to one another, “Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt.”

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# LESSON 2:

## FURTHER REASONS WHY WE TEND TO WORK AGAINST THIS INTENDED LIFE

**In the face of overwhelming difficulties, what was Saul’s response to the situation? What was the effect of this and why did he not seek God? Why is this so critical to us as we face difficulties?**

### **Read 1 Samuel 17:4–11:**

<sup>4</sup> And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six<sup>[a]</sup> cubits<sup>[b]</sup> and a span. <sup>5</sup> He had a helmet of bronze on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels<sup>[c]</sup> of bronze. <sup>6</sup> And he had bronze armor on his legs, and a javelin of bronze slung between his shoulders. <sup>7</sup> The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron. And his shield-bearer went before him. <sup>8</sup> He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why have you come out to draw up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. <sup>9</sup> If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us." <sup>10</sup> And the Philistine said, "I defy the ranks of Israel this day. Give me a man, that we may fight together." <sup>11</sup> When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

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# LESSON 2: FURTHER REASONS WHY WE TEND TO WORK AGAINST THIS INTENDED LIFE

**What does God say about being angry? How can this lead to sin, and then what are the consequences of that? Why is this so important to our everyday lives?**

**Read Ephesians 4:26–27:**

<sup>26</sup> Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, <sup>27</sup> and give no opportunity to the devil.

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**What is the outcome of us staying in anger and exercising wrath? Why?**

**Read Psalm 37:8:**

<sup>8</sup> Refrain from anger and forsake wrath!  
Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.

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# LESSON 2:

## FURTHER REASONS WHY WE TEND TO WORK AGAINST THIS INTENDED LIFE

**What causes strife in our lives? What is going inside of our hearts and minds that promotes strife, and how is this harmful to us?**

**Read James 4:1–2:**

Warning Against Worldliness

**4** What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions<sup>[a]</sup> are at war within you?<sup>[b]</sup><sup>2</sup> You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.

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**What are the consequences to how we live when we are obsessed and occupied with difficult circumstances? What then happens as we work to solve these issues ourselves?**

**Read Psalm 38:1–12:**

Do Not Forsake Me, O LORD

A Psalm of David, for the memorial offering.

**38** O LORD, rebuke me not in your anger,  
nor discipline me in your wrath!

<sup>2</sup> For your arrows have sunk into me,  
and your hand has come down on me.

<sup>3</sup> There is no soundness in my flesh  
because of your indignation;  
there is no health in my bones  
because of my sin.

# LESSON 2: FURTHER REASONS WHY WE TEND TO WORK AGAINST THIS INTENDED LIFE

<sup>4</sup> For my iniquities have gone over my head;  
like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.

<sup>5</sup> My wounds stink and fester  
because of my foolishness,

<sup>6</sup> I am utterly bowed down and prostrate;  
all the day I go about mourning.

<sup>7</sup> For my sides are filled with burning,  
and there is no soundness in my flesh.

<sup>8</sup> I am feeble and crushed;  
I groan because of the tumult of my heart.

<sup>9</sup> O LORD, all my longing is before you;  
my sighing is not hidden from you.

<sup>10</sup> My heart throbs; my strength fails me,  
and the light of my eyes—it also has gone from me.

<sup>11</sup> My friends and companions stand aloof from my plague,  
and my nearest kin stand far off.

<sup>12</sup> Those who seek my life lay their snares;  
those who seek my hurt speak of ruin  
and meditate treachery all day long.

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# LESSON 2: FURTHER REASONS WHY WE TEND TO WORK AGAINST THIS INTENDED LIFE

**What happens when we cannot figure things out and see no solution to our situations?**

**Read Psalm 6:1–10:**

O LORD, Deliver My Life

To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments; according to The Sheminith.<sup>[a]</sup>  
A Psalm of David.

**6** O LORD, rebuke me not in your anger,  
nor discipline me in your wrath.

**2** Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am languishing;  
heal me, O LORD, for my bones are troubled.

**3** My soul also is greatly troubled.  
But you, O LORD—how long?

**4** Turn, O LORD, deliver my life;  
save me for the sake of your steadfast love.

**5** For in death there is no remembrance of you;  
in Sheol who will give you praise?

**6** I am weary with my moaning;  
every night I flood my bed with tears;  
I drench my couch with my weeping.

**7** My eye wastes away because of grief;  
it grows weak because of all my foes.

**8** Depart from me, all you workers of evil,  
for the LORD has heard the sound of my weeping.

**9** The LORD has heard my plea;  
the LORD accepts my prayer.

**10** All my enemies shall be ashamed and greatly troubled;  
they shall turn back and be put to shame in a moment.

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# LESSON 2:

## FURTHER REASONS WHY WE TEND TO WORK AGAINST THIS INTENDED LIFE

Describe spiritually what happens when we focus on circumstances and we resolve it on our own. Why is this so critical to understand since we will always have trouble in our lives (because we live in the world, which is characterized by trouble)?

**Read John 8:34–35:**

<sup>34</sup> Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave<sup>[a]</sup> to sin. <sup>35</sup> The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever.

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Spiritually, then, what is the consequence of being a slave to the world, to focus on difficult circumstances? Why is this so important to understand as believers?

**Read Isaiah 59:2:**

<sup>2</sup> but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.

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# LESSON 2: FURTHER REASONS WHY WE TEND TO WORK AGAINST THIS INTENDED LIFE

In the following six verses, when we are trying to figure things out on our own, what are we missing? What consequences do we then face? Why?

## Read Jeremiah 2:7–13:

<sup>7</sup> And I brought you into a plentiful land  
to enjoy its fruits and its good things.  
But when you came in, you defiled my land  
and made my heritage an abomination.

<sup>8</sup> The priests did not say, 'Where is the Lord?'  
Those who handle the law did not know me;  
the shepherds<sup>[a]</sup> transgressed against me;  
the prophets prophesied by Baal  
and went after things that do not profit.

<sup>9</sup> "Therefore I still contend with you,  
declares the LORD,  
and with your children's children I will contend.

<sup>10</sup> For cross to the coasts of Cyprus and see,  
or send to Kedar and examine with care;  
see if there has been such a thing.

<sup>11</sup> Has a nation changed its gods,  
even though they are no gods?  
But my people have changed their glory  
for that which does not profit.

<sup>12</sup> Be appalled, O heavens, at this;  
be shocked, be utterly desolate,  
declares the LORD,

<sup>13</sup> for my people have committed two evils:  
they have forsaken me,  
the fountain of living waters,  
and hewed out cisterns for themselves,  
broken cisterns that can hold no water.

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# LESSON 2: FURTHER REASONS WHY WE TEND TO WORK AGAINST THIS INTENDED LIFE

## Read Amos 2:13–16:

<sup>13</sup> “Behold, I will press you down in your place,  
as a cart full of sheaves presses down.

<sup>14</sup> Flight shall perish from the swift,  
and the strong shall not retain his strength,  
nor shall the mighty save his life;

<sup>15</sup> he who handles the bow shall not stand,  
and he who is swift of foot shall not save himself,  
nor shall he who rides the horse save his life;

<sup>16</sup> and he who is stout of heart among the mighty  
shall flee away naked in that day;”  
declares the LORD.

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## Read Matthew 6:25–32:

### Do Not Be Anxious

<sup>25</sup> “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? <sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? <sup>27</sup> And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>28</sup> And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, <sup>29</sup> yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? <sup>31</sup> Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ <sup>32</sup> For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.

# LESSON 2:

## FURTHER REASONS WHY WE TEND TO WORK AGAINST THIS INTENDED LIFE

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### Read Psalm 85:10–11:

<sup>10</sup> Steadfast love and faithfulness meet;  
righteousness and peace kiss each other.  
<sup>11</sup> Faithfulness springs up from the ground,  
and righteousness looks down from the sky.

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### Read Jeremiah 8:13; Jeremiah 9:13–16:

<sup>13</sup> When I would gather them, declares the Lord,  
there are no grapes on the vine,  
nor figs on the fig tree;  
even the leaves are withered,  
and what I gave them has passed away from them.<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>13</sup> And the Lord says: “Because they have forsaken my law that I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice or walked in accord with it, <sup>14</sup> but have stubbornly followed their own hearts and have gone after the Baals, as their fathers taught them. <sup>15</sup> Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will feed this people with bitter food, and give them poisonous

# LESSON 2: FURTHER REASONS WHY WE TEND TO WORK AGAINST THIS INTENDED LIFE

water to drink. <sup>16</sup> I will scatter them among the nations whom neither they nor their fathers have known, and I will send the sword after them, until I have consumed them.”

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## Read Jeremiah 17:1–6:

The Sin of Judah

**17** “The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron; with a point of diamond it is engraved on the tablet of their heart, and on the horns of their altars, <sup>2</sup> while their children remember their altars and their Asherim, beside every green tree and on the high hills, <sup>3</sup> on the mountains in the open country. Your wealth and all your treasures I will give for spoil as the price of your high places for sin throughout all your territory. <sup>4</sup> You shall loosen your hand from your heritage that I gave to you, and I will make you serve your enemies in a land that you do not know, for in my anger a fire is kindled that shall burn forever.”

<sup>5</sup> Thus says the LORD:

“Cursed is the man who trusts in man  
and makes flesh his strength,<sup>[a]</sup>  
whose heart turns away from the LORD.

<sup>6</sup> He is like a shrub in the desert,  
and shall not see any good come.

He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness,  
in an uninhabited salt land.

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# LESSON 3:

## HOW WE ARE CALLED TO WALK WITH GOD TO RESOLVE ISSUES, TAKING SABBATH/REST AND CREATING MARGIN



Since we now understand that figuring things out on our own and separating ourselves from the life of God and the resolution available from God for our life circumstances, what is the remedy for returning to God and seeking Him to resolve our issues? How fast does this then put us back on track to the abundant life of God for us? Why is this so critical to how we live?

### Read 1 John 1:9:

<sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

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"...we occupy our minds with unforgiveness, trying to resolve things on our own, separate from God, and coming to a place where you're weary, worried, and fearful."

As related to the following two verses, as we restore our relationship to God, what is necessary for us to learn to be able to follow Him? What does this mean practically in our lives?

### Read Psalm 37:1–8:

He Will Not Forsake His Saints

<sup>[a]</sup> Of David.

**37** Fret not yourself because of evildoers;

be not envious of wrongdoers!

<sup>2</sup> For they will soon fade like the grass

and wither like the green herb.

<sup>3</sup> Trust in the LORD, and do good;

dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.<sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Delight yourself in the LORD,

# LESSON 3:

## HOW WE ARE CALLED TO WALK WITH GOD TO RESOLVE ISSUES, TAKING SABBATH/REST AND CREATING MARGIN

and he will give you the desires of your heart.

<sup>5</sup> Commit your way to the LORD;  
trust in him, and he will act.

<sup>6</sup> He will bring forth your righteousness as the light,  
and your justice as the noonday.

<sup>7</sup> Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him;  
fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way,  
over the man who carries out evil devices!

<sup>8</sup> Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath!  
Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.

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### Read Proverbs 3:1–6:

Trust in the LORD with All Your Heart

<sup>3</sup> My son, do not forget my teaching,  
but let your heart keep my commandments,

<sup>2</sup> for length of days and years of life  
and peace they will add to you.

<sup>3</sup> Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you;  
bind them around your neck;  
write them on the tablet of your heart.

<sup>4</sup> So you will find favor and good success<sup>[a]</sup>  
in the sight of God and man.

<sup>5</sup> Trust in the LORD with all your heart,  
and do not lean on your own understanding.

<sup>6</sup> In all your ways acknowledge him,  
and he will make straight your paths.



# LESSON 3:

## HOW WE ARE CALLED TO WALK WITH GOD TO RESOLVE ISSUES, TAKING SABBATH/REST AND CREATING MARGIN

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**What is the significance of rejoicing? What does this mean as we face difficult circumstances? Why is this so important to us?**

### **Read Philippians 4:4–9:**

<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. <sup>5</sup> Let your reasonableness<sup>[a]</sup> be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; <sup>6</sup> do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

<sup>8</sup> Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. <sup>9</sup> What you have learned<sup>[b]</sup> and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

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# LESSON 3:

## HOW WE ARE CALLED TO WALK WITH GOD TO RESOLVE ISSUES, TAKING SABBATH/REST AND CREATING MARGIN

When we are heavily burdened by difficulties, what are we called to do? What does then God promise to us? Why is this so wonderful for us to experience?

**Read Matthew 11:28–30:**

<sup>28</sup> Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

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How are we to pursue God and His answers for us in difficult circumstances? What does He promise, and why is that so comforting to us?

**Read Matthew 6:33–34:**

<sup>33</sup> But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

<sup>34</sup> “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

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# LESSON 3:

## HOW WE ARE CALLED TO WALK WITH GOD TO RESOLVE ISSUES, TAKING SABBATH/REST AND CREATING MARGIN

To walk with God, what is required Why?How does it practically work for us to live this way?

**Read Psalm 40:6-8:**

<sup>6</sup> In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted,  
but you have given me an open ear.[a]  
Burnt offering and sin offering  
you have not required.  
<sup>7</sup> Then I said, "Behold, I have come;  
in the scroll of the book it is written of me:  
<sup>8</sup> I delight to do your will, O my God;  
your law is within my heart."

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How did Christ live when He was here on Earth as a man? What did He demonstrate for us. Why is that so important to how we live?

**Read John 4:34; 6:38:**

<sup>34</sup> Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.  
<sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.

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# LESSON 3:

## HOW WE ARE CALLED TO WALK WITH GOD TO RESOLVE ISSUES, TAKING SABBATH/REST AND CREATING MARGIN

After God created everything, what did He do? What is the meaning of this and why so important to how we are live our lives?

### Read Genesis 2:1–3:

The Seventh Day, God Rests

**2** Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. <sup>2</sup> And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. <sup>3</sup> So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

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What are the ingredients to how we are to take sabbath/rest? What are the purposes of these and why are they so important to our normal living?

### Read Isaiah 58:13–14:

<sup>13</sup> “If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath,  
from doing your pleasure<sup>[a]</sup> on my holy day,  
and call the Sabbath a delight  
and the holy day of the LORD honorable;  
if you honor it, not going your own ways,  
or seeking your own pleasure,<sup>[b]</sup> or talking idly;<sup>[c]</sup>  
<sup>14</sup> then you shall take delight in the Lord,  
and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth;<sup>[d]</sup>  
I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father,  
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

# LESSON 3:

## HOW WE ARE CALLED TO WALK WITH GOD TO RESOLVE ISSUES, TAKING SABBATH/REST AND CREATING MARGIN

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**As branches of the vine, what can we expect regarding pruning? What is the purpose, and what is the result? What does this look like in our lives?**

**Read John 15:1-5:**

I Am the True Vine

**15** "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup> Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup> Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. <sup>5</sup> I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

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# LESSON 3:

## HOW WE ARE CALLED TO WALK WITH GOD TO RESOLVE ISSUES, TAKING SABBATH/REST AND CREATING MARGIN

In the following three sets of verses, what is required for us to be pruned and have God create margin our lives? How do we practically apply this?

### Read Ephesians 5:15–21:

<sup>15</sup> Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, <sup>16</sup> making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup> Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. <sup>18</sup> And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup> addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, <sup>20</sup> giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

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### Read Proverbs 8:12–21:

<sup>12</sup> "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence,  
and I find knowledge and discretion.  
<sup>13</sup> The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil.  
Pride and arrogance and the way of evil  
and perverted speech I hate.  
<sup>14</sup> I have counsel and sound wisdom;  
I have insight; I have strength.  
<sup>15</sup> By me kings reign,  
and rulers decree what is just;  
<sup>16</sup> by me princes rule,  
and nobles, all who govern justly.<sup>[a]</sup>  
<sup>17</sup> I love those who love me,

# LESSON 3:

## HOW WE ARE CALLED TO WALK WITH GOD TO RESOLVE ISSUES, TAKING SABBATH/REST AND CREATING MARGIN

and those who seek me diligently find me.

<sup>18</sup> Riches and honor are with me,  
enduring wealth and righteousness.

<sup>19</sup> My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold,  
and my yield than choice silver.

<sup>20</sup> I walk in the way of righteousness,  
in the paths of justice,

<sup>21</sup> granting an inheritance to those who love me,  
and filling their treasuries.

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### Read James 1:5-8:

<sup>5</sup> If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. <sup>6</sup> But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup> For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; <sup>8</sup> he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

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# LESSON 4: HOW WE ARE CALLED TO ALLOW GOD TO GIVE US FREEDOM IN DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIPS AND CONFLICT: MOVING TO COMPLETE RESOLUTION ON ALL

## Read Hebrews 10:10–18:

<sup>10</sup> And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

<sup>11</sup> And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. <sup>12</sup> But when Christ<sup>[a]</sup> had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, <sup>13</sup> waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. <sup>14</sup> For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

<sup>15</sup> And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying,

<sup>16</sup> “This is the covenant that I will make with them  
after those days, declares the Lord:

I will put my laws on their hearts,  
and write them on their minds,”

<sup>17</sup> then he adds,

“I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.”

<sup>18</sup> Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

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# LESSON 4: HOW WE ARE CALLED TO ALLOW GOD TO GIVE US FREEDOM IN DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIPS AND CONFLICT: MOVING TO COMPLETE RESOLUTION ON ALL

For the following two sets of verses, please write your responses. As we move forward toward seeking God and His resolutions to our circumstances, what do we need to do to have God do this for us? What does this mean practically and why does God ask us to live this way with Him as we seek resolutions and answers?

## Read Psalm 25:1–5; 12–15:

Teach Me Your Paths

<sup>[a]</sup> Of David.

**25** To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

<sup>2</sup> O my God, in you I trust;

let me not be put to shame;

let not my enemies exult over me.

<sup>3</sup> Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame;

they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

<sup>4</sup> Make me to know your ways, O Lord;

teach me your paths.

<sup>5</sup> Lead me in your truth and teach me,

for you are the God of my salvation;

for you I wait all the day long.

<sup>12</sup> Who is the man who fears the Lord?

Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose.

<sup>13</sup> His soul shall abide in well-being,

and his offspring shall inherit the land.

<sup>14</sup> The friendship<sup>[a]</sup> of the Lord is for those who fear him,

and he makes known to them his covenant.

<sup>15</sup> My eyes are ever toward the Lord,

for he will pluck my feet out of the net.

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# LESSON 4: HOW WE ARE CALLED TO ALLOW GOD TO GIVE US FREEDOM IN DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIPS AND CONFLICT: MOVING TO COMPLETE RESOLUTION ON ALL

## Read Jeremiah 17:7–8:

<sup>7</sup>“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord,  
whose trust is the Lord.

<sup>8</sup> He is like a tree planted by water,  
that sends out its roots by the stream,  
and does not fear when heat comes,  
for its leaves remain green,  
and is not anxious in the year of drought,  
for it does not cease to bear fruit.”

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**As we face difficulties, especially those involving other people who are road blocking us, causing trouble, or coming against us, how are we to process toward a resolution? What does this look like in practical living? Why is this God’s way for us?**

## Read Ephesians 4:25–27; 29–32:

<sup>25</sup> Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. <sup>26</sup> Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, <sup>27</sup> and give no opportunity to the devil.

<sup>29</sup> Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. <sup>30</sup> And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup> Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. <sup>32</sup> Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

# LESSON 4: HOW WE ARE CALLED TO ALLOW GOD TO GIVE US FREEDOM IN DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIPS AND CONFLICT: MOVING TO COMPLETE RESOLUTION ON ALL

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**When we have been the ones to cause an offense against someone else (and thus are experiencing difficulties because of it), what does God ask us to consider and then respond to His way on this Why is this our responsibility and why is this so important to our living in freedom?**

## **Read Matthew 5:21–26:**

### Anger

<sup>21</sup> “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’<sup>22</sup> But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother<sup>[a]</sup> will be liable to judgment; whoever insults<sup>[b]</sup> his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell<sup>[c]</sup> of fire.<sup>23</sup> So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you,<sup>24</sup> leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.<sup>25</sup> Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison.<sup>26</sup> Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.<sup>[d]</sup>

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# LESSON 4: HOW WE ARE CALLED TO ALLOW GOD TO GIVE US FREEDOM IN DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIPS AND CONFLICT: MOVING TO COMPLETE RESOLUTION ON ALL

**When others have offended us, what is our perspective and what is our role to move toward resolution in this situation? What does an ambassador do and who does He represent? Why is this such an important concept as we seek resolution on difficult relationships?**

## **Read 2 Corinthians 5:12–21:**

<sup>12</sup> We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart. <sup>13</sup> For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. <sup>14</sup> For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; <sup>15</sup> and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

<sup>16</sup> From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. <sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

<sup>[a]</sup> The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. <sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup> that is, in Christ God was reconciling<sup>[b]</sup> the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

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# LESSON 4: HOW WE ARE CALLED TO ALLOW GOD TO GIVE US FREEDOM IN DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIPS AND CONFLICT: MOVING TO COMPLETE RESOLUTION ON ALL

Though we carry the role of an ambassador with a heart to work toward resolution/reconciliation with others, how are we to handle when others are not willing to process truth with us? What is to be our heart? Our perspective? Our specific actions in this situation that we cannot force to a reconciliation? On what basis does God wish us to live this way? Why is this so critical to understand and follow? What can we thus expect for ourselves?

## Read Romans 12:9–21:

### Marks of the True Christian

<sup>9</sup> Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. <sup>10</sup> Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. <sup>11</sup> Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit,<sup>[a]</sup> serve the Lord. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. <sup>13</sup> Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

<sup>14</sup> Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. <sup>15</sup> Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup> Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly.<sup>[b]</sup> Never be wise in your own sight. <sup>17</sup> Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. <sup>18</sup> If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. <sup>19</sup> Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it<sup>[c]</sup> to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."<sup>20</sup> To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head."<sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

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# LESSON 4: HOW WE ARE CALLED TO ALLOW GOD TO GIVE US FREEDOM IN DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIPS AND CONFLICT: MOVING TO COMPLETE RESOLUTION ON ALL

**As we consider how to operate with people who oppose us, come against us, or cause us difficulty, what does Christ reveal regarding how we are to approach this? What do we do if people agree to process with us? What do we do when they do not? What is the benefit to us and why is this so important to live out?**

## **Read Luke 10:1–13:**

### Jesus Sends Out the Seventy-Two

**10** After this the Lord appointed seventy-two<sup>[a]</sup> others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. **2** And he said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. **3** Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. **4** Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. **5** Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house!’ **6** And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. **7** And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. **8** Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. **9** Heal the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ **10** But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, **11** ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.’ **12** I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

### Woe to Unrepentant Cities

**13** “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

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# LESSON 5: HOW WE ARE CALLED TO ALLOW GOD TO RESOLVE OUR CLUTTER AND REVISE OUR CALENDAR SO WE ENJOY THE SUPERABUNDANT LIFE AVAILABLE TO US

For the two next set of verses, respond to these questions: As we leave things behind, what then is important for moving forward into God’s answers for us? What does it mean to set our mind on the Spirit and be led by the Spirit? How does this play out practically for us?

## Read Romans 8:5:

<sup>5</sup> For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

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## Read Romans 8:12–17:

Heirs with Christ

<sup>12</sup> So then, brothers,<sup>[a]</sup> we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. <sup>13</sup> For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. <sup>14</sup> For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons<sup>[b]</sup> of God. <sup>15</sup> For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” <sup>16</sup> The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup> and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

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# LESSON 5: HOW WE ARE CALLED TO ALLOW GOD TO RESOLVE OUR CLUTTER AND REVISE OUR CALENDAR SO WE ENJOY THE SUPERABUNDANT LIFE AVAILABLE TO US

**What is the Holy Spirit's (who is resident within us) role on our behalf? What is He doing? Why? What then must He do for and in us to lead us to God's will? What are God's answers for us in our situations?**

**Read Romans 8:26–27:**

<sup>26</sup> Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. <sup>27</sup> And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because<sup>[a]</sup> the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

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**For the two next set of verses, please respond to these questions: On what basis are we to understand, receive, and then respond to God's will? What does that look like and how do we live this out practically?**

**Read Colossians 3:15:**

<sup>15</sup> And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

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# LESSON 5: HOW WE ARE CALLED TO ALLOW GOD TO RESOLVE OUR CLUTTER AND REVISE OUR CALENDAR SO WE ENJOY THE SUPERABUNDANT LIFE AVAILABLE TO US

**Read Romans 14:17:**

<sup>17</sup> For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

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**What does it mean that all things work together for good? To whom is this promise given, and thus what is necessary for us to experience? Why is this again so important to understand as we move to receive God's answers?**

**Read Romans 8:28:**

<sup>28</sup> And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good,<sup>[a]</sup> for those who are called according to his purpose.

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# LESSON 5: HOW WE ARE CALLED TO ALLOW GOD TO RESOLVE OUR CLUTTER AND REVISE OUR CALENDAR SO WE ENJOY THE SUPERABUNDANT LIFE AVAILABLE TO US

For the two next sets of verses, respond to these questions: As we settle that all things will work together for our good, what is important to our process and how do we experience this process? Why?

## Read Psalm 46:1–2:

God Is Our Fortress

To the choirmaster. Of the Sons of Korah. According to Alamo<sup>[a]</sup>. A Song.

**46** God is our refuge and strength,  
a very present<sup>[b]</sup> help in trouble.

<sup>2</sup>Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way,  
though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,

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## Read Psalm 85:4–13:

<sup>4</sup>Restore us again, O God of our salvation,  
and put away your indignation toward us!

<sup>5</sup>Will you be angry with us forever?  
Will you prolong your anger to all generations?

<sup>6</sup>Will you not revive us again,  
that your people may rejoice in you?

<sup>7</sup>Show us your steadfast love, O LORD,  
and grant us your salvation.

<sup>8</sup>Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,  
for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints;  
but let them not turn back to folly.

<sup>9</sup>Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him,  
that glory may dwell in our land.

# LESSON 5: HOW WE ARE CALLED TO ALLOW GOD TO RESOLVE OUR CLUTTER AND REVISE OUR CALENDAR SO WE ENJOY THE SUPERABUNDANT LIFE AVAILABLE TO US

<sup>10</sup> Steadfast love and faithfulness meet;  
righteousness and peace kiss each other.  
<sup>11</sup> Faithfulness springs up from the ground,  
and righteousness looks down from the sky.  
<sup>12</sup> Yes, the LORD will give what is good,  
and our land will yield its increase.  
<sup>13</sup> Righteousness will go before him  
and make his footsteps a way.

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**For the next two sets of verses, respond to these questions: To understand, receive, and then be able to follow God’s path and steps for His answers to our circumstances, what process had God given us to obtain confirmation and certainty? Why is this so important for our process?**

### **Read Matthew 18:18–20:**

<sup>18</sup> Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed<sup>[a]</sup> in heaven. <sup>19</sup> Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup> For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

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# LESSON 5: HOW WE ARE CALLED TO ALLOW GOD TO RESOLVE OUR CLUTTER AND REVISE OUR CALENDAR SO WE ENJOY THE SUPERABUNDANT LIFE AVAILABLE TO US

## Read Malachi 3:16–18:

The Book of Remembrance

<sup>16</sup>Then those who feared the Lord spoke with one another. The Lord paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the Lord and esteemed his name. <sup>17</sup>“They shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him. <sup>18</sup>Then once more you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him.

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