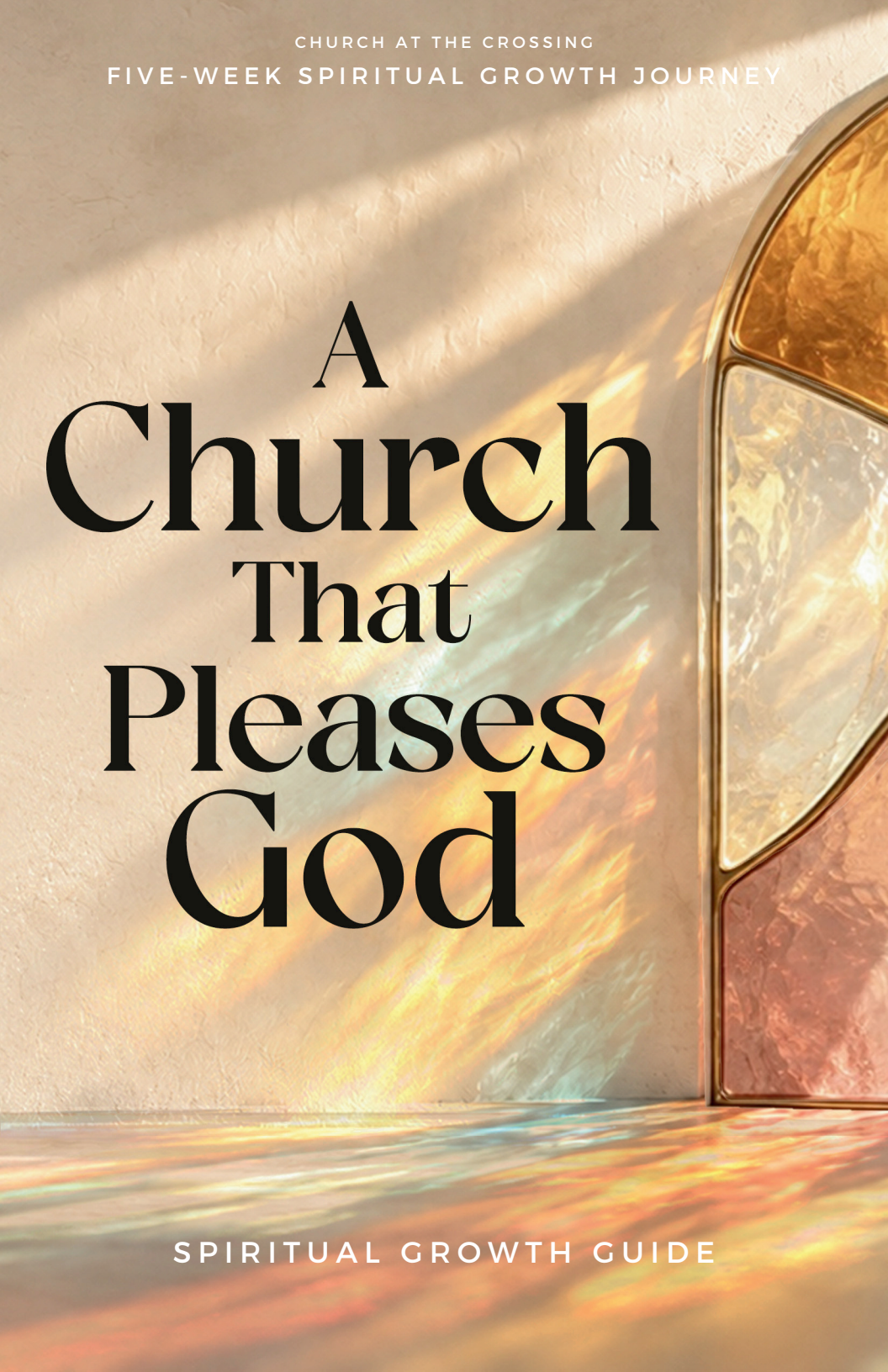
CHURCH AT THE CROSSING

FIVE-WEEK SPIRITUAL GROWTH JOURNEY



A Church That Pleases God

SPIRITUAL GROWTH GUIDE

A Note from Pastor James

Hello Church Family,

I am looking forward to all God will do during this new series: **A Church That Pleases God**.

My prayer for each of us as we dive into Scripture over the next several weeks is to experience the presence of God in a new and fresh way. I am praying that the Holy Spirit will speak truth, love, and hope into your life each day as you encounter the wonderful and amazing Word of God.

Please join me in praying for God to challenge and change us through His Word.

Blessings to you, my friend.



James Roberts
Senior Pastor

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How to Use This Book

Welcome to our Spiritual Growth Journey: **A Church That Pleases God**. For the next five weeks, we will focus on three things as a church:

- Attend a weekly service online or in person:
  - Thursday 7:00 PM, Sunday 9:45 AM & 11:15 AM
- Join a Small Group
- Spend time individually with God each day

To get the most out of this journey, we encourage you to participate in all three. This book is a tool to help achieve these goals.

For each of the five weeks, you will find the following resources here:

- A space for Sermon Notes
- That week's Group Guide (basis for your group discussion)
- A S.O.A.P. passage and guide for each of the remaining days for you to use in your time with God (with a day off to catch up if you need it)

We have designed each week of this book to begin on Sundays. If you want to start on a different day of the week, no problem! Also, if you have found another model helpful and beneficial in engaging Scripture, please feel free to use that instead! S.O.A.P. is just one of many tools which help us to see what is happening in a biblical passage and how God might want us to apply that to our lives.

Make this book your own! Not everyone's journey looks the same, but what is important is that we are all moving toward God together and with intentionality.

S.O.A.P. Instructions and Tips

Sometimes it can be hard to know how to get something out of reading your Bible. We don't want to just read, we want the words to transform us, give us hope, guidance, and help us become more like Jesus. The S.O.A.P. tool is one way to help dig in deeper.

What does S.O.A.P. mean?

S

The S stands for Scripture
As you read the passage for each day, be on the lookout for words or phrases that strike you. Take a few minutes to physically write them down, making yourself slow down and take them in.

O

The O stands for Observation
Ask yourself questions like: What is happening in the passage? Who is the audience? What do you learn about God and people? Are there any examples, promises or commands to note? Sometimes it can help to record these things in a bullet list.

A

The A stands for Application
This is an opportunity for God's Word to become personal. Reflect on the following: What is God saying to me? How can I apply what I just read to my own personal life? What changes do I need to make? Is there a step of faith that I need to take?

P

The P stands for Prayer
Prayer is two-way communication with God. What do you sense God may want you to take away from your time? A step you need to take? Ask Him for help and encouragement if you need it. Use this time for confession and repentance if you need to, in order to restore your intimacy with Him.

Example S.O.A.P.
Author: Tim Lucas

SCRIPTURE: James 1:22-27 (NIV)
"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do. Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."

OBSERVATION:

- James is very concerned with his recipients understanding what true spiritual growth is. Not just learning things but putting them into practice in a way that gives life.
- He also shares that not doing what the Word says causes confusion in our lives and the lives of others.
- The way to blessing is by approaching the Word with a confidence that following it will bring freedom and joy.
- Another emphasis is the connection between spiritual maturity and what words come out of our mouths.
- Then, he moves very practically to how we can show that our 'religion' is pure and meaningful: by caring for and providing things for orphans and widows.

APPLICATION:

- One of the ways I can work toward applying this in my life is to ask the Holy Spirit to help me put into practice what I read in my time with God.
- Then, I can ask God to help me recognize opportunities in real time to do what the Word says.
- Recalling to mind that freedom, joy, and blessing come from walking in God's ways.
- Be aware of those around me who are in need (such as widows and orphans) and be exceedingly generous toward them.

PRAYER:

Lord, thank you for loving me and speaking to me personally. Help my faith to increase and my trust level to deepen in you, especially when you call me to things that seem outside of my control. Time after time in my life you have provided for me. You are faithful. Lead me to a greater dependence and obedience in my daily walk with you.

Other Tips For Your Devotional Time

You can expect that your S.O.A.P. devotional time will take about 15-20 minutes each day. It isn't a strict rule to be followed, but a model that you can use to interact with God. Some days might be easier than others, some days might involve more insight than others.

Please reference the S.O.A.P. examples as a template for how others have used this tool. Everyone brings their own style and personality to this tool. That's good! This is your time with God; it doesn't need to be done in a rigid and rote way.

The most important part is that you exercise these spiritual muscles. God will speak! All we have to do is be willing to spend time with Him.

It can be helpful to decide ahead of time where and when you will spend this devotional time in Scripture and with God. If it helps to decide and commit to that here and now, go ahead! You may want to share these with your group for accountability and encouragement.

The place where I will spend time with God each day for the next five weeks:

_____

The time I will spend with God each day for the next five weeks:

_____

SERMON NOTES

Week 1

What stood out to me...

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One thing I learned about God…

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One thing I can apply to my life...

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How I'm going to pray this week...

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GROUP GUIDE

Week 1

A Reverent Church

CONNECT (15 MINUTES)

- What is something that you take very seriously?
- Who is someone you deeply respect, and why?

CATCH-UP (15 MINUTES)

- When and where do you hope to do your devotional time over the next 5 weeks?

CONSIDER (20 MINUTES)

Read Philippians 2:12-13 aloud together.

- What do you think 'fear and trembling' communicates about our relationship with God?
- Verse 13 says that **God is at work in us**. What does that tell us about where spiritual transformation ultimately comes from?
- How do these verses balance our responsibility and God's work?
- What do you think a reverent church looks like in everyday life, not just during a worship service?

CHANGE (20 MINUTES)

- Is there an area of your life that you want to grow in when it comes to reverence for God?
- What are some things that can cause a church to become comfortable with God rather than reverent toward God?
- What stood out to you the most about this week's sermon?
- What is one change you could make this week that would demonstrate greater reverence for God?

COMMIT (10 MINUTES)

Close the group in prayer by praying for the following…

- That God would give us a deeper awe of who He is
- That we would guard against becoming casual, complacent, or comfortable in our relationship with Him
- That He would continue His transforming work in each person at CATC

S.O.A.P.

MONDAY

Week 1

SCRIPTURE: **Philippians 2:12-18**

OBSERVATION:

APPLICATION:

PRAYER:

S.O.A.P.

TUESDAY

Week 1

SCRIPTURE: **Proverbs 9:10-12**

OBSERVATION:

APPLICATION:

PRAYER:

S.O.A.P.

WEDNESDAY

Week 1

SCRIPTURE: **Isaiah 6:1-8**

OBSERVATION:

APPLICATION:

PRAYER:

S.O.A.P.

THURSDAY

Week 1

SCRIPTURE: **Psalm 96:1-9**

OBSERVATION:

APPLICATION:

PRAYER:

S.O.A.P.

FRIDAY

Week 1

SCRIPTURE: **Romans 12:1-2**

OBSERVATION:

APPLICATION:

PRAYER:

SERMON NOTES

Week 2

What stood out to me...

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One thing I learned about God…

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One thing I can apply to my life...

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How I'm going to pray this week...

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GROUP GUIDE

Week 2

A Faith-Filled Church

CONNECT (15 MINUTES)

- What is your favorite part about the fall season?
- Share one high and one low from the previous week.

CATCH-UP (10 MINUTES)

- What stood out to you during your devotional time this week?

CONSIDER (20 MINUTES)

Read Luke 7:1-10 aloud together.

- What did the centurion believe about Jesus?
- Notice that the centurion trusted Jesus before seeing the outcome. Why is that significant?
- What is the difference between believing that God **can** do something and trusting God with what He **will** do?

CHANGE (20 MINUTES)

- Where do you currently find it easiest to trust God?
- Where do you find it hardest to trust Him?
- What might a faith-filled church look like when facing uncertainty, disappointment, or opposition?
- What is one step of faith you believe God might be inviting you to take over the next few weeks?

COMMIT (10 MINUTES)

Close the group by praying for the following...

- That CATC would become a church marked by genuine faith
- That we would trust God's character even when we don't trust His plan
- That our faith would become contagious to those around us

S.O.A.P.

MONDAY

Week 2

SCRIPTURE: **Luke 7:1-10**

OBSERVATION:

APPLICATION:

PRAYER:

S.O.A.P.

TUESDAY

Week 2

SCRIPTURE: **Hebrews 11:1-6**

OBSERVATION:

APPLICATION:

PRAYER:

S.O.A.P.

WEDNESDAY

Week 2

SCRIPTURE: **Proverbs 3:1-6**

OBSERVATION:

APPLICATION:

PRAYER:

S.O.A.P.

THURSDAY

Week 2

SCRIPTURE: **Mark 9:14-29**

OBSERVATION:

APPLICATION:

PRAYER:

S.O.A.P.

FRIDAY

Week 2

SCRIPTURE: **Matthew 14:22-33**

OBSERVATION:

APPLICATION:

PRAYER:

SERMON NOTES

Week 3

What stood out to me...

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One thing I learned about God…

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One thing I can apply to my life...

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How I'm going to pray this week...

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GROUP GUIDE

Week 3

A Bold Church

CONNECT (15 MINUTES)

- If you could spend a perfect fall Saturday anywhere, what would you do?
- Are you naturally more bold or cautious?

CATCH-UP (10 MINUTES)

- Share one thing that you are thankful for this week.

CONSIDER (20 MINUTES)

Read Acts 4:1-13 aloud together.

- What had Peter and John done that created opposition?
- What did the leaders notice about Peter and John in verse 13?
- What does this passage teach us about the relationship between being with Jesus and speaking for Jesus?
- How would you describe biblical boldness? What is it—and what isn't it?

CHANGE (20 MINUTES)

- What usually holds you back when it comes to sharing your faith?
- How can our boldness be rooted in love **rather than** fear or anger?
- Who is one person God might be inviting you to have a spiritual conversation with?
- What is one step of faith you believe God might be inviting you to take over the next few weeks?

COMMIT (10 MINUTES)

Close the group in prayer by praying for the following...

- That God would give us courage to represent Jesus
- That we would be bold without being arrogant, and listen well before speaking
- That our lives would make our words about Jesus credible

S.O.A.P.

MONDAY

Week 3

SCRIPTURE: **Acts 4:1-13**

OBSERVATION:

APPLICATION:

PRAYER:

S.O.A.P.

TUESDAY

Week 3

SCRIPTURE: **2 Timothy 1:6-8**

OBSERVATION:

APPLICATION:

PRAYER:

S.O.A.P.

WEDNESDAY

Week 3

SCRIPTURE: **Ephesians 6:18-20**

OBSERVATION:

APPLICATION:

PRAYER:

S.O.A.P.

THURSDAY

Week 3

SCRIPTURE: **Joshua 1:1-9**

OBSERVATION:

APPLICATION:

PRAYER:

S.O.A.P.

FRIDAY

Week 3

SCRIPTURE: **Matthew 5:13-16**

OBSERVATION:

APPLICATION:

PRAYER:

SERMON NOTES

Week 4

What stood out to me...

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One thing I learned about God…

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One thing I can apply to my life...

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How I'm going to pray this week...

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GROUP GUIDE

Week 4

A Unified Church

CONNECT (15 MINUTES)

- What is one group or team you have been part of that had great unity?
- What helped that group become unified?

CATCH-UP (10 MINUTES)

- Ask if anyone would like to share something that stood out to them from their devotional time this week.

CONSIDER (20 MINUTES)

Read John 17:20-26 aloud together.

- Who is Jesus praying for in this passage?
- What specifically does Jesus ask the Father to do for His followers?
- Why do you think unity mattered so much to Jesus?
- According to verse 21, how can the unity of believers affect people who don't yet believe?

CHANGE (20 MINUTES)

- How can a church maintain unity while still allowing room for different personalities, preferences, backgrounds, and opinions?
- In your opinion, what makes unity in the church difficult?
- How can we disagree with one another without becoming divided?
- What is one thing you could do this week to strengthen unity rather than division?

COMMIT (10 MINUTES)

Close the group in prayer by praying for the following...

- That Jesus would protect the unity of CATC
- That we would pursue reconciliation quickly
- That we would refuse gossip, division, and unnecessary conflict

S.O.A.P.

MONDAY

Week 4

SCRIPTURE: **John 17:20-26**

OBSERVATION:

APPLICATION:

PRAYER:

S.O.A.P.

TUESDAY

Week 4

SCRIPTURE: **Ephesians 4:1-6**

OBSERVATION:

APPLICATION:

PRAYER:

S.O.A.P.

WEDNESDAY

Week 4

SCRIPTURE: **Philippians 2:1-5**

OBSERVATION:

APPLICATION:

PRAYER:

S.O.A.P.

THURSDAY

Week 4

SCRIPTURE: **Romans 12:9-18**

OBSERVATION:

APPLICATION:

PRAYER:

S.O.A.P.

FRIDAY

Week 4

SCRIPTURE: **Colossians 3:12-15**

OBSERVATION:

APPLICATION:

PRAYER:

SERMON NOTES

Week 5

What stood out to me...

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One thing I learned about God…

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One thing I can apply to my life...

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How I'm going to pray this week...

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GROUP GUIDE

Week 5

A Loving Church

CONNECT (15 MINUTES)

- Ask the group members which they prefer among the following:
  a. Carve a pumpkin or decorate a gingerbread house.
  b. Cook the entire Thanksgiving meal or clean up afterward.
  c. Have fall weather all year or experience all four seasons.

CATCH-UP (10 MINUTES)

- Ask if anyone would like to share what impacted them the most over the last five weeks.

CONSIDER (20 MINUTES)

Read John 13:31-38 aloud together.

- Why does Jesus say our love for one another will identify us as His disciples?
- What does biblical love require beyond simply having warm feelings toward someone?
- How can love be both compassionate and truthful?

CHANGE (20 MINUTES)

- What happens to a church when people know the Bible well but don't love one another well?
- How can we make people who are new, lonely, hurting or different from us feel genuinely seen at CATC?
- Where do you think our church already demonstrates love particularly well?
- Where could we grow?
- What is one practical way you could love someone differently this week?

COMMIT (10 MINUTES)

Close the group in prayer by praying for the following…

- That God's love would define CATC
- That we would love people who are both easy and difficult to love
- That our love would extend beyond the church walls into our neighborhoods and communities

S.O.A.P.

MONDAY

Week 5

SCRIPTURE: **John 13:31-38**

OBSERVATION:

APPLICATION:

PRAYER:

S.O.A.P.

TUESDAY

Week 5

SCRIPTURE: **1 Corinthians 13:1-13**

OBSERVATION:

APPLICATION:

PRAYER:

S.O.A.P.

WEDNESDAY

Week 5

SCRIPTURE: **1 John 4:7-12**

OBSERVATION:

APPLICATION:

PRAYER:

S.O.A.P.

THURSDAY

Week 5

SCRIPTURE: **Luke 10:25-37**

OBSERVATION:

APPLICATION:

PRAYER:

S.O.A.P.

FRIDAY

Week 5

SCRIPTURE: **Matthew 5:43-48**

OBSERVATION:

APPLICATION:

PRAYER:



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