



THE GATHERING WELL

UNDERSTANDING THE GOSPEL

A KNOWING JESUS GROWTH GUIDE



UNDERSTANDING THE GOSPEL

- 01** WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?
- 02** HOW DOES THE GOSPEL CHANGE US?
- 03** WHY DOES THE GOSPEL MATTER?
- 04** WHERE DOES THE GOSPEL GO?



THE HEART OF *knowing Jesus*

The Gathering Well uses these three focus areas of Spiritual Formation to support our approach to the journey of faith.



BEGIN WITH PRAYER

Communication with God is our starting point. Any resources with this icon are designed to support and equip you to pray, using Scripture as our primary lens, and providing questions and prompts to encourage you to talk with God consistently.



STUDY THE BIBLE

All of our resources are anchored in the truth of God's Word. This icon will indicate spaces where you will engage the Scriptures. We seek to provide educational resources and tools that will help God's Word come alive to you.



BUILD COMMUNITY

We believe that the life of faith is expressed in community, not isolation. Resources and prompts marked with this icon are geared toward reminding you that we are designed to be in relationship with God and with others.

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?



Begin with PRAYER. Jot down a quick prayer, telling God the big and small questions you have about Him, His Son, and His Spirit. Ask Him to help you see and understand for yourself the truth of His rescue plan for you, which is the gospel.

You may remember that the grand narrative of God, the story He's telling over all of time, can be summarized by these four simple words: **Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration.** The gospel story is the glorious news of the One God sent to initiate redemption and to reconcile people to Himself. The gospel is the story of Jesus Christ.

If we have confessed Christ Jesus as Lord (Romans 10:9-10), we are now on a journey towards restoration and being formed into the image of Jesus Christ.

NOTHING CAN BE ADDED TO THE FINISHED WORK OF JESUS ON THE CROSS.

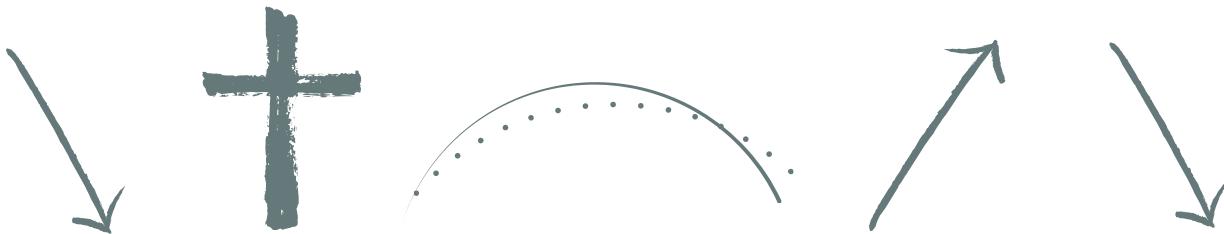
Jesus is the Redeemer who came to set the record straight, to embody real humanity and to live the life none of us could ever live: a perfectly sinless, wholly obedient, God-pleasing life.

And He also died a death that we all deserved: a substitutionary, in-our-place death.

Now, by grace through faith, **He offers to us His life**, in exchange for our broken, disordered lives.

Not only does Jesus meet us in Spirit to bring hope and to give new life, but He promises to one day return to bring about wholesale restoration: to bring about His kingdom here on earth, where He will finally and forever put death to death, right every wrong, dry every eye, and make every sad thing come untrue (Revelation 21).

The gospel is the good news that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died for our sins and rose again, eternally triumphant over his enemies, so that there is now no condemnation for those who believe, but only everlasting joy.



CHRIST CAME

John 1:14-18

CHRIST DIED

Romans 5:6-8

CHRIST WAS BURIED & RAISED

1 Corinthians 15:1-4

CHRIST ASCENDED

Acts 1:8-11, John 16:7

CHRIST WILL COME AGAIN

John 14:2-3

REFLECT

What does the gospel mean to me? What have I understood or misunderstood? How has my understanding changed? How is my understanding changing about the gospel?

GRATITUDE TIME

Let's make this practical: read each Bible verse. Use the space below to write a prayer of gratitude for each thing Christ has done for you.

John
1:14-18

Romans
5:6-8

1 Corinthians
15:1-4

Acts 1:8-11,
John 16:7

John
14:2-3

HOW DOES THE GOSPEL CHANGE US?

THE GOSPEL CHANGES OUR PERSPECTIVE

In the grand narrative of God's story, **the Redeemer entered history and changed everything**. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us," John wrote in the first chapter of his account, "We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

Understanding the gospel and how the Redeemer changes everything **magnifies Jesus over everything else** in our lives. We can see how Jesus fully satisfies us and meets all of our needs. Through this, we can keep a right perspective in all things. We can trust that God is sovereign over everything.

We can ask ourselves:

HOW DOES JESUS CHANGE MY VIEW OF EVERY AREA OF MY LIFE?

My **relationships**.

My current **circumstances**.

My **roles** as spouse, parent, employee, child, sibling, or boss.

My **church**.

When we think about our lives in light of the gospel, the problems of this world become smaller, and God's faithfulness becomes bigger.

REFLECT

Where do I need to let my understanding of the gospel change my perspective?

THE GOSPEL CHANGES US

This is where we answer the question: **WHO AM I?**

We name and rejoice in the **redemption** we experienced when Christ Jesus took hold of us. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come!" If you have confessed Christ as your Savior, "you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3).

Our lives are being constantly changed and renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit as we increasingly submit every area of our lives to the leadership of Christ. Scholars call this "sanctification". Simply put, this is growth and maturity in the life of faith. We can thank God for His promise to complete the work He started in us!

Because of Jesus, you have options for godly living, cultivating peace, and walking by faith that you did not have before.



READ the Word, to be reminded of your in-Christ status: the NEW you, that has been reborn into the family of God! Read the verses below and look for words that capture what we have or who we are “in Christ Jesus.”

ROMANS 3:24
GALATIANS 4:7
EPHESIANS 2:10
COLOSSIANS 2:10

TIME TO REFLECT

Use the prompts below to reflect on the work God is doing in you and how the gospel changes things in our lives.

READ: ROMANS 8:28-39

What is God doing in and for those who love Him and are called according to His purposes? (See verses 28-30)

Look at the list of things that cannot separate us from the love of God (vv35, 38, 39) -- identify things in your own journey that you tend to think CAN separate you (failure, shame, etc) -- write your own declaration of truth below!

God, I thank you that despite my personal feelings or thoughts, Your Word declares that nothing, not even _____ or _____ can separate me from Your love! Help me to believe You.

READ: PHILIPPIANS 1:4-11

What is some of the "gospel work" that either Paul or the Philippians church was accomplishing?

Knowing that it is Christ at work IN the Philippine church, what is Paul praying for them? (See verses 9-11)
Record and reword Paul's prayer as your own, asking God to carry on the work He's started in YOU.

WHY DOES THE GOSPEL MATTER?



The gospel of Jesus Christ offers three fundamental freedoms and one ultimate outcome for those who choose to believe.

FREEDOM TO FORGIVE AND BE FORGIVEN

Read Romans 5:6-11. What does this Scripture reveal about God and the life that He wants for you?

FREEDOM FROM SIN

Read Romans 6:1-11. What does this Scripture reveal about God and the life that He wants for you?

FREEDOM FOR ETERNITY

Read Romans 8:18-25. What does this Scripture reveal about God and the life He wants for you?

ULTIMATE JOY

Read Romans 8:31-39. What does this Scripture reveal about God and the life He wants for you?

DO YOU HAVE ULTIMATE JOY?



PRAY a prayer of confession and repentance before the Lord. If you've never heard or understood the truth of the gospel, now is the time to choose for yourself to enter into a relationship with God as a result of what only He has done and could do for you.

Use the following breath prayer to surrender your life to Jesus for the first time or to acknowledge His authority and love for you in your current circumstance. Believe that His Spirit can fill your heart with joy, no matter the season you are walking in.

breathe in: **Lord forgive me for my sins against You. I'm no longer a slave to my sin.**

breathe out: **I surrender my life to You. You are my Lord and Savior.**

breathe in: **Give me the faith to trust You completely, believing in Your promises.**

breathe out: **Fill me with Your peace and joy and help me share it with others.**

Now it's your turn. If you were to choose a few words or phrases from Scripture or your own "holy imagination", how might you compose other breath prayers you could use throughout the day?

breathe in:

breathe out:

breathe in:

breathe out:



REFLECT & PRAY

Circle one of the 3 fundamental freedoms listed below to focus on and then work through the prompts.

FREEDOM TO FORGIVE AND BE FORGIVEN

Try: Romans 5, Matthew 18, or Ephesians 2

FREEDOM FROM SIN

Try: Romans 6, Romans 8, or Galatians 5

FREEDOM FOR ETERNITY

Try: Romans 8, 2 Corinthians 5, or Colossians 2

Look for a passage of Scripture that will help you better understand this freedom you have in Christ. Write the passage or verse word for word below.

Now, write a prayer utilizing the Scripture to declare this freedom over your life!

WHERE DOES THE GOSPEL GO?

In light of our understanding of the gospel and the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ, we are compelled to share this gift with others. The gospel first starts within ourselves and goes out from there. The gospel can go everywhere because of God's plan. **Discipleship** is the everyday process of learning to follow and be like Jesus, and **disciple-making** is teaching others to do the same. When we become a disciple of Jesus, we can introduce others to the way of life the gospel equips us to live. And, once we do, that person who is now a disciple or follower of Jesus can go and make more disciples wherever they may be.



COMMUNITY building isn't primarily about finding your people and shoring up loneliness; it's about sharing the story of God's goodness with His people -- and those who need to know Him still -- to demonstrate His perfect love and presence!

Think about the people already in your life, whether long-time friendships or neighbors, family or Bible study groups. How might you bring your understanding of the gospel into your ongoing conversations?

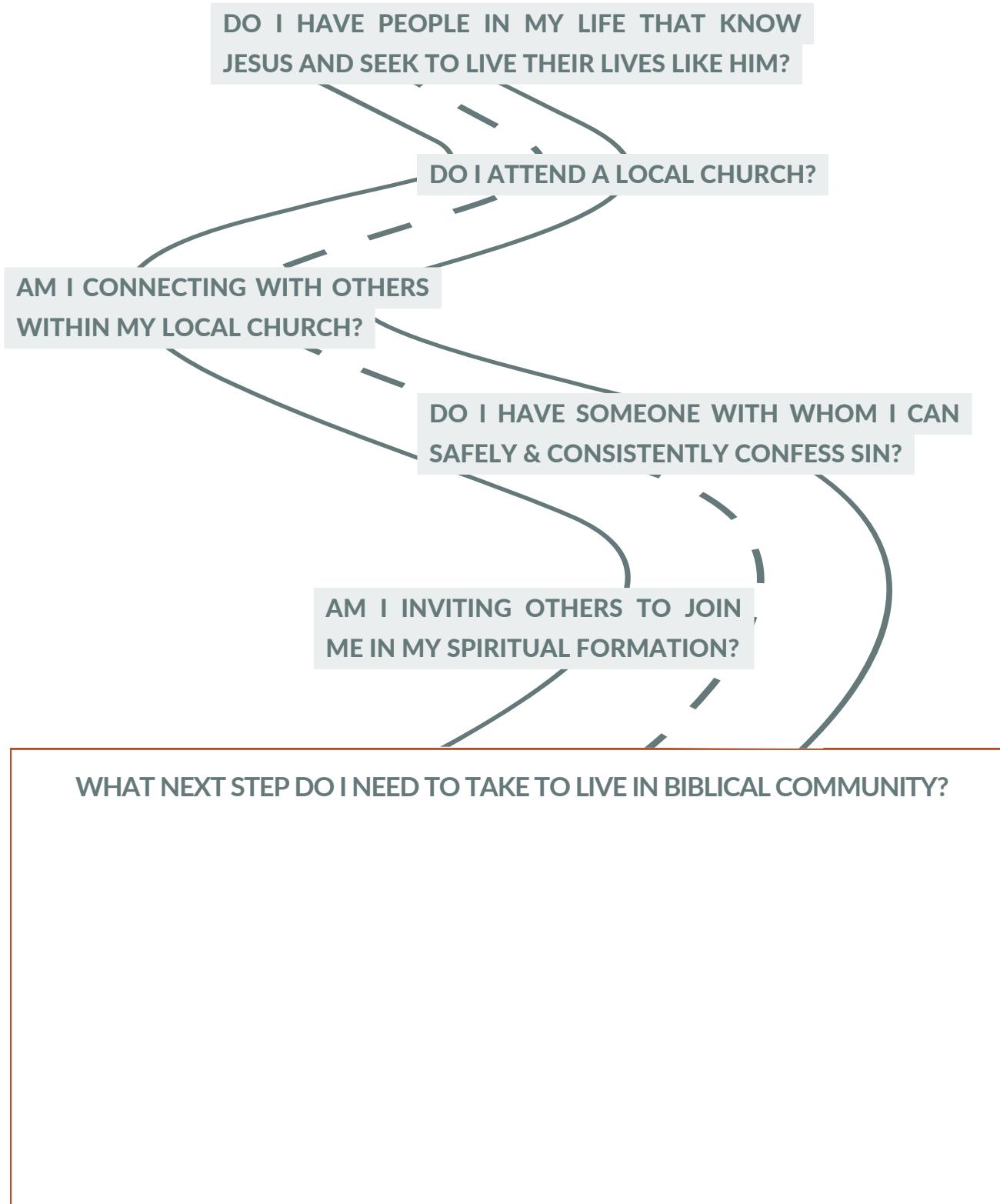
This is why we encourage you to look around and ask yourself if you are living in God's design for community. One view of Biblical community is that when we are living in it, we are:

COMFORTABLE IN CONFESSION
FAITHFUL IN FELLOWSHIP
SUBMITTED TO SERVING
HOPEFUL IN HOSPITALITY
ON MISSION TO MULTIPLY

Through these five areas, we can take steps toward building deep, vulnerable, Biblical community and proclaim the gospel in the way we live our lives.



PRAY and ask the Lord to give you clarity about how you can build Biblical community so that you can proclaim the gospel. Use the questions below to help you take an inventory of where you are, asking the Holy Spirit for wisdom.



LET'S TAKE INVENTORY

Use the questions below to help you reflect on and assess each of these areas of building community.

Comfortable in Confession: We start by confessing our challenges, mistakes, and sins to God in everyday conversations with Him. *Because of the gospel*, we can also begin the practice of confession with other believers without fear of condemnation.

Is there someone in my life that I can share and confess my sin struggles with? If not, how can I pray and ask God to help me find someone that I can do this with?

Faithful in Fellowship: To be faithful is to remain steadfast. We would challenge you to remember the example of God's faithfulness to us. Even when we are not steadfast, He is. *Because of the gospel*, we can be faithful in fellowship with fellow believers and trust Jesus with the people around us, even when it is hard.

Is there someone that has been a faithful friend to me, even when I have not been faithful, that I can thank God for? Is there someone that I can pursue faithfully in prayer and invitation, even when it is hard?

Submitted to Serving: In a rushed and hurried world, we often feel short of time or ability to serve others. *Because of the gospel*, we are invited to lay down our comforts and conveniences to love others with more than just our words but with our deeds as well, to seek out ways we can serve.

Is there someone around me that I can seek to serve in word (offering encouragement, affirmation, appreciation, prayers) or in deed (providing a meal, helping with a task, offering a tangible solution to a challenge they're faced with)? Is there someone around me that has offered to serve me, and have I allowed them to do this with humility?

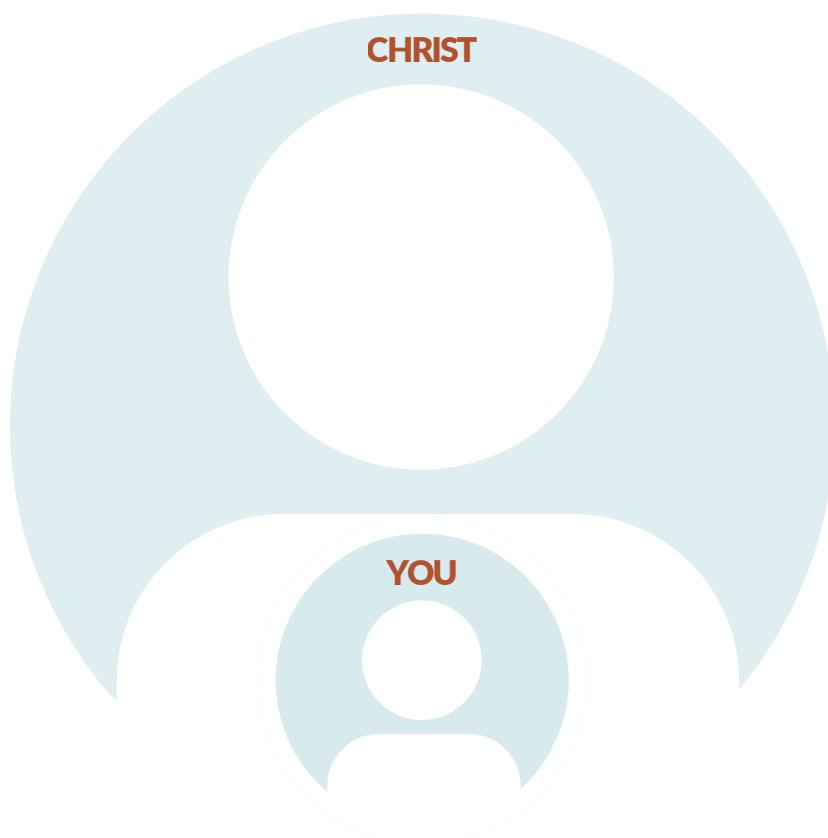
Hopeful in Hospitality: When we are hopeful in hospitality, we are driven by the hope we have in Christ to welcome those who are different from us in a way that makes them feel comfortable and safe. *Because of the gospel*, we can invite those outside of our circle to have a seat at our table.

Where in my life can I practice hospitality to the stranger? Is there somewhere I can serve, or a place I can create margin in my life to be available to connect with people outside of my circle in my everyday rhythms?

On Mission to Multiply: "Building community is about allowing God to use your life to create an outpost of His love. Your life becomes a way that God teaches others about who He is and His story of rescue, restoration, and redemption for them. Multiplication is about recognizing that God can use you to help someone else see how they can be used by God in the unique place He has placed them. Because of the gospel, God often gives us the opportunity to be on mission in the most ordinary ways."

Where in my life can I be on mission to teach others about God's gift of grace? Where do I see possibilities to formally or informally bear witness to the work of God in my life?

Part of understanding the gospel is about believing that we are now spiritually and eternally positioned **in Christ**, once and for all. Living from this place of understanding and belief doesn't always change our circumstances radically, but it does radically change us and where **our new identity** is found. As a result, we have this invitation to live a new life following Jesus and rooted in prayer, Bible study, and building community.



Curious about this graphic? Check out Colossians 3:3 or 1 Corinthians 3:23!

What is a next step you can take today in light of a new or renewed understanding of the gospel?



HE SEES ME HERE

Still thinking? Still reflecting? Have questions? Here you go: use this page as you wish for your own prayers and musings.



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Contributing authors: Jazmin Caton, Chelsea Miller, and Sarah T. Sandel

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

connect@thegatheringwell.org

www.thegatheringwell.org