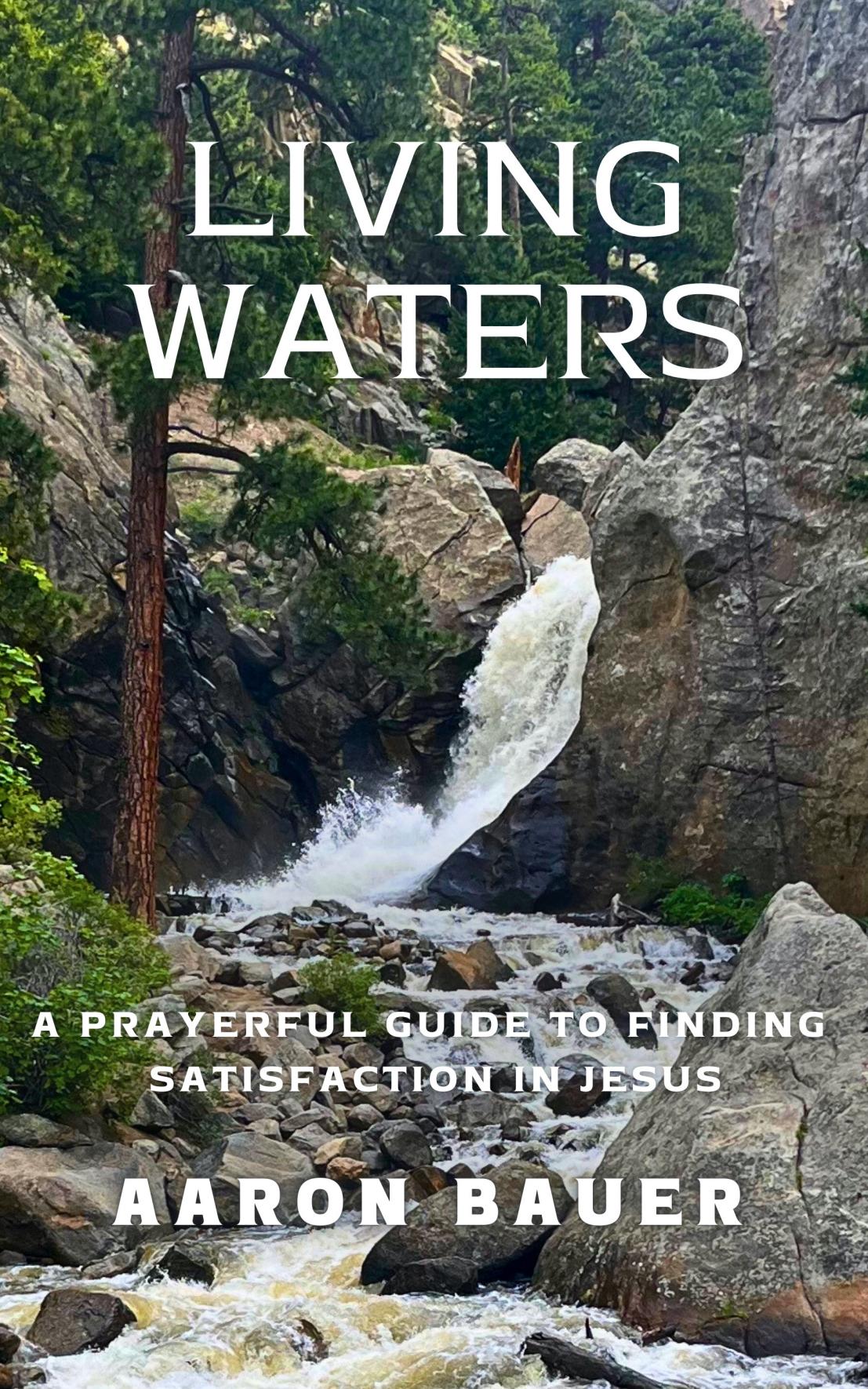


LIVING WATERS

A photograph of a waterfall cascading down a rocky cliff into a pool of water. A tall pine tree stands in the foreground on the left. The background is filled with dense green trees and rocky terrain.

A PRAYERFUL GUIDE TO FINDING
SATISFACTION IN JESUS

AARON BAUER

Living Waters

A Prayerful Guide To Finding
Satisfaction In Jesus

Aaron Bauer

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Dedication:

To all who are thirsty for more of Jesus—may you find Him to be your Living Water and your Rock.

Acknowledgments:

Thank you to my family, friends, and faith community who have walked this journey with me, encouraged my heart, and shared their stories of thirst and satisfaction. Special thanks to those who have tested these sessions, offered their stories, shared honest feedback, and prayed for this project.

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Preface

Welcome to Living Waters: A Prayerful Guide to Finding Satisfaction in Jesus. This book is designed for a twelve-session journey—whether you’re walking it alone, with a spiritual companion, or as part of a small group. Each session is crafted to help you move beyond surface-level faith into deeper intimacy with Christ, discovering your unique pathway to meeting with Jesus and learning how to bring others along for the journey.

Ways to Engage

- **Individually:**

Set aside intentional time each week to read the narrative introduction, meditate on the main Scripture passage, and reflect on the open-ended questions. Use a journal to capture your thoughts, prayers, and insights as you move through each session.

Tip: Don’t rush—allow space for the Spirit to speak and for your soul to respond.

- **With a Spiritual Companion:**

Invite a friend or mentor to journey with you. Read the

weekly material together, discuss your responses to the reflection questions, and pray for each other using the Trinitarian prayer focus.

Tip: Consider sharing your Sacred Pathway discoveries and encourage each other in your unique approaches to meeting with Jesus.

- **In a Group Setting:**

Gather weekly with others to read the narrative introduction aloud, reflect on the main Scripture passage, and discuss the open-ended questions. Take time to pray together using the provided Trinitarian prayers, and consider sharing personal stories or journaling highlights at the end of each session.

Tip: Encourage honest sharing and respect the diversity of spiritual pathways within your group.

Suggestions for Deeper Interaction

- **Share your story:**

Respond to the narrative prompts with your own experiences—either in your journal or with your group.

- **Pray for one another:**

Use the Trinitarian prayer focus to intercede for specific needs or longings that surface during your time together.

- **Explore Scripture context:**

Read surrounding verses or related passages to deepen your understanding of the session's main Scripture.

- **Use the Appendix:**

Review your journey with chapter based scriptural prayers and the list of scriptures for further study at the end of the guide.

- **Journal and revisit:**

Return to your journal throughout the week, noting any new insights or ways you sense Jesus inviting you deeper.

What to Expect from This Journey

- **A progressive pathway:**

Each session builds on the last, guiding you from naming your thirst, to discovering your unique pathway to Jesus, to living as one who overflows with His life.

- **Personal discovery:**

You'll be encouraged to discern your own spiritual wiring (drawing from "Sacred Pathways") and to experiment with practices that help you meet with Jesus most naturally.

- **Community and invitation:**

You'll be challenged to bring others along, sharing your journey and inviting companions to seek Jesus together.

- **Transformation:**

As you move through the guide, anticipate a deeper sense of satisfaction in Christ, a greater awareness of the Triune God, and a life that overflows to bless others. Let this guide be more than a study—let it be a journey of encountering Jesus as your Living Water and your Rock, discovering your

unique pathway, and learning to walk it with others.

Before you begin Session One, I invite you to read my Introduction. There, I share my own story and the deep personal need that inspired this journey.

May this be a season of deep satisfaction, renewed intimacy, and abundant life in Christ—for you and for those you journey with.

Introduction

“I can’t get no satisfaction,” it seems. We live in a world overflowing with promises of fulfillment—career success, relationships, possessions, and experiences all call out to us with the promise of satisfaction. Yet, if we’re honest, these wells often run dry. I see glimpses of contentment when I sit with friends or family after a great adventure or the glow of a fire after a day working in the woods or sitting back after a rich meal with people I love that also love me. Pursuing career and acquiring possessions I find I am chasing that moment where I experience contentment. That’s all I want. Like the Israelites wandering in the wilderness, we can find ourselves thirsty, longing for something deeper and more lasting.

My own journey has been marked by this search. As a pastor, husband, father, and leader, I’ve often felt the pull to seek satisfaction in what I do or what I have, rather than in who Jesus is. But the more I’ve pursued Him, the more I’ve discovered that Jesus Himself is not just the giver of good things—He is the Good Thing. He is the living water, the rock in the wilderness, the feast that truly satisfies.

On the cover of this guide is a photo I took while adventuring outside Boulder, Colorado. I was alone, with no set schedule, yet still caught in that “can’t stop, won’t stop” mindset. Eleven miles up Boulder Canyon Drive, I missed the pull-off to Boulder Falls. In my

mind, that was it—“gotta keep moving.” But I sensed Jesus inviting me to turn around and go see it. There was no one waiting for me, no one to complain about stopping, so I found a place to turn around and went back.

As I walked the short path from the highway, the invitation to be with Jesus grew stronger. One-tenth of a mile later, I found myself standing before the grandeur of the waterfall, in tears. Recently, I’ve been trying to deepen my connection with Jesus, and He’s been inviting me further up and further in—into the terrain of the Eden Garden He’s making in my heart. Months later, in prayer, He invited me again, and I climbed the falls, sat with Him on a high boulder, and we ate a snack together—just me and Jesus: My Rock and My Redeemer.

This book began as a simple devotional, born out of a desire to move beyond surface-level faith and into deeper intimacy with Christ. It has grown into a twelve-session journey—designed for both personal reflection and group exploration. Each session builds on the last, guiding you from naming your thirst to discovering your unique pathway to Jesus, and finally to living as one who overflows with His life.

Whether you walk this path alone, with a friend, or in a small group, you are invited to move beyond surface-level faith and into deeper intimacy with Christ. This is an invitation to hunger and thirst for Jesus Himself, not just for what He provides.

Inspired by the imagery of the rock that gave water in the wilderness, the streams of living water Jesus promised, and the psalms that call God our refuge and satisfaction, this guide is a pathway—a journey from spiritual thirst to the joy of being filled in Him.

C.S. Lewis once wrote that our problem is not that we desire too much, but that we settle for too little.

My prayer is that, together, we will discover that Jesus is not holding out on us. He is our ever-present help, our sustainer, and the One who satisfies the deepest desires of our hearts.

What can you expect from this journey?

- You'll be invited to name your deepest longings and bring them honestly before God.
- You'll encounter the Triune God—Father, Son, and Spirit—who is not holding out on you, but inviting you to know Him as your source and satisfaction.
- You'll reflect on the many ways people meet with Jesus, drawing from the wisdom of Gary Thomas' *Sacred Pathways* and the insights of spiritual guides like John and Stasi El-dredge, C.S. Lewis.
- You'll discover your own personal pathway to Jesus, and be encouraged to bring others along who are similarly wired to seek Him.
- You'll learn to recognize and resist the false sources of satisfaction our culture offers, and instead cultivate a life that is well-watered, flourishing, and fruitful.
- You'll be equipped, not just to receive, but to overflow—becoming living water for others in your community and beyond.

In each session, you'll find a narrative introduction (often drawn from my own journey), a main Scripture passage, open-ended reflec-

tion questions, and a Trinitarian prayer focus. The aim is not just learning, but encountering Jesus as your Living Water and your Rock. All of creation looks to Him for satisfaction, shouldn't you?

May this journey help you taste and see that the Lord is good, and find your true satisfaction in Jesus—your Living Water and your Rock. My hope is that you'll not only find your own thirst quenched, but become a source of living water for those around you.

Let's embark on this journey together—twelve sessions to deeper satisfaction, greater intimacy, and a life that overflows with the goodness of God.

Chapter One

Naming Our Thirst

We live in a thirsty world. Ask any doctor, and they'll tell you that much of what we interpret as hunger is actually thirst. If we would just drink some water, many of our cravings would settle down. The body can survive for weeks without food—but only a few days without water. We were made to run on it.

A few years ago on a mission trip to Costa Rica, our team was playing a pickup soccer game against some local young adults. Let's just say I was sweating buckets. After a few minutes, I'd retreat to the sidelines and guzzle water like my life depended on it. I'm pretty sure the locals were looking at me thinking, *"Amigo, you know you're sweating so much because you keep drinking, right?"*

It was funny—but it made me think. Sweating is a sign that your body is trying to stay cool. But the real signal you need to watch is thirst. Thirst tells you when your body is running dry. You ignore it too long, and things start to break down.

But it's not just our bodies that are parched.

In the world of social media, being “thirsty” has taken on a new meaning. It’s a term young people use to describe someone who’s desperately looking for attention, affirmation, or approval—someone fishing for likes, hearts, or fire emojis. While the slang might seem a little over the top, the instinct is ancient. Whether we’re scrolling, shopping, hustling, or performing, so much of what we do is driven by thirst. A thirst to matter. To be seen. To be filled.

There are all kinds of thirst. Some of us long for intimacy, others for success or control. Some thirst for escape—anything to numb the ache. And there are all kinds of drinks being sold to us as solutions. Sports drinks, soft drinks, energy drinks—each one promising to satisfy. We know they don’t offer real hydration, but we keep buying. We keep sipping. We keep searching.

The same is true in our souls. There are so many things we reach for when our spirits feel dry. Work. Approval. Entertainment. Even religious performance. But none of these truly satisfy the deep places. They may mask the thirst for a while, but they don’t heal it. Eventually, we end up more depleted than before.

But what if thirst isn’t the enemy?

What if your thirst is a clue—a holy invitation?

Key Passage: Jesus and the Woman at the Well

In John 4, Jesus travels through Samaria and stops at Jacob’s well, where He encounters a Samaritan woman. She comes for physical water, but Jesus sees her deeper thirst—a longing for acceptance, love, and purpose. Their conversation reveals not only her story, but the universal story of all who search for satisfaction apart from God. Jesus offers her something she never expected: living water that truly satisfies.

This story can feel overly familiar, but it's rich with cultural and theological tension many miss.

Jesus isn't just passing through Samaria—He's stepping into enemy territory. Jews and Samaritans had long viewed each other with suspicion and disdain, rooted in centuries of rivalry over worship, race, and scripture. The woman references “this mountain” (Mount Gerizim), where Samaritans had built their own temple, believing it to be the true center of worship. That temple was destroyed by Jewish forces about 150 years before this encounter. The conflict was alive and personal.

According to George Athas in *Bridging the Testaments*, the Samaritans expected not a Davidic king but a prophet like Moses. Their Scriptures were limited to the Pentateuch (the first 5 books of the Bible), and their worship was shaped by that narrower hope. This woman isn't just dodging theological questions—she's revealing a deep longing: “*When the prophet comes, maybe then things will be made right.*”

And Jesus doesn't dismiss her tradition. He honors her thirst.

Layered into this is her social shame. She's coming to draw water at noon, the hottest part of the day, likely to avoid the judging eyes of other women. Her life is fragmented by broken relationships, but Jesus doesn't flinch. Instead, He sees her, speaks with her, and offers her something far more than a debate about mountains or morality.

He offers Himself.

Jesus bridges more than cultural divides—He bridges human thirst across time and space, from ancient wells to our modern lives.

Read John 4:4–15

Now he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a Samaritan town called Sychar, near the plot of land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, so Jesus, since he was tired from the journey, sat right down beside the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me some water to drink." (For his disciples had gone off into the town to buy supplies.)

So the Samaritan woman said to him, "How can you—a Jew—ask me, a Samaritan woman, for water to drink?" (For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans.)

Jesus answered her, "If you had known the gift of God and who it is who said to you, 'Give me some water to drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."

"Sir," the woman said to him, "you have no bucket and the well is deep; where then do you get this living water? Surely you're not greater than our ancestor Jacob, are you? For he gave us this well and drank from it himself, along with his sons and his livestock."

Jesus replied, "Everyone who drinks some of this water will be thirsty again. But whoever drinks some of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again, but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up to eternal life."

The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.”

Reflection Questions

Where do you feel spiritually thirsty right now?

(Describe a situation or season where you've sensed a deep longing or emptiness.)

What “wells” have you turned to that have left you unsatisfied?

(Consider things like work, relationships, entertainment, or even religious activity.)

How might Jesus be inviting you to come to Him for living water today?

(What would it look like to bring your thirst to Him instead of somewhere else?)

Action Step

What is one practical way you will respond to your thirst for God this week? With whom will you share what you're learning or experiencing?

(Write a commitment or plan, and consider telling a friend or your group.)

Prayer Focus

Father:

Thank You for seeing my thirst and longing to satisfy it. Help me recognize the ways I've been searching for satisfaction apart from You.

Son:

Jesus, You are the living water. Draw me to Yourself, quench my deepest needs, and show me that only You can truly satisfy my soul.

Spirit:

Holy Spirit, awaken my desire for God. Reveal the places where I've settled for less, and give me courage to seek the fullness of life found in Jesus.

(Spend a few moments in silence, then pray for each other or journal your prayer.)

For Further Study

Read the following related passages. Write out the scriptures to practicing hearing from God and respond with a few lines as well.

- Psalm 42:1–2

- Psalm 63:1, 3–5

- Isaiah 55:1–2

Chapter Two

Water from the Rock

We all have different energy styles. Some of us feel like we're running on empty, convinced we have nothing left to give. Others seem to have endless reserves—until, suddenly, the well runs dry. There are at least two ways to deal with this: we can limit our involvement with the world to match our own resources, or we can seek the uncreated, inexhaustible energy that comes from God Himself.

Jesus offered Photina (the traditional name of the woman at the well) living water that would never run dry. Many people know me as an exuberant guy—my energy is like a sports car. I can go fast, but I need to refuel often. Maybe you're more like a steady sedan, able to chug along for days, but eventually, your tank runs low too. No matter our style, the truth is the same: the clock is ticking, the miles are counting, and eventually, we all run short of what we need.

Just as physical thirst is a signal that our bodies need replenishment, spiritual thirst is a God-given gauge for our souls. We can ignore it,

mask it, or try to fill it with substitutes—but sooner or later, we need true resupply.

The Israelites' wilderness wandering is a powerful picture of this truth. What should have been a ten-day journey stretched into forty years—a season marked by scarcity, frustration, and desperate need. Are you wandering? Are you running on empty?

Dry spells are common for me. I tend to drive hard until I run dry, then feel restless or empty. I love the ministry I get to do, but sometimes I worry it defines me—that I've become so accustomed to ministry it's become my identity. That's a dangerous pairing, because my purpose and worth cannot be defined by people's response to me.

John Eldredge, in *Waking the Dead*, writes that the greatest invitation of the gospel is to live from the heart, as God's beloved—not from a place of striving, performance, or exhaustion. I'm learning that Jesus is far more interested in my heart than my output. He invites me to come to Him, not just when I'm strong, but especially when I'm empty.

Jesus has convinced me that I am in control of my integrity, and He is in control of my influence. My job is clear cut, and there is no reason to worry about His job. Preaching used to be a burden—a way to prove I was worthy. Now, I simply spend time worshiping Jesus and thanking Abba that I am His beloved son: creative, energetic, relational, and here just to bring Him joy.

The Israelites knew what it was to be at the end of their resources—desperate for water in a barren land. But God's answer wasn't just about survival; it was a signpost to something greater. The rock that poured out water for Israel pointed forward to Christ, our true source.

Key Passage: Water from the Rock—A Signpost to Christ

After being delivered from Egypt, the Israelites wandered in the wilderness, quickly discovering that freedom brought new challenges. When they ran out of water, they grumbled and doubted God's care. God instructed Moses to bring water from a rock—a miracle that not only met their physical need, but pointed forward to a deeper spiritual reality. In the New Testament, Paul reveals that this “rock” was Christ Himself, present with His people even in the desert.

Read Numbers 20:2–13

There was no water for the community, and so they gathered themselves together against Moses and Aaron. The people contended with Moses, saying, “If only we had died when our brothers died before the LORD! Why have you brought the Lord’s community into this wilderness? So that we and our cattle should die here? Why have you brought us up from Egypt only to bring us to this dreadful place? It is no place for grain, or figs, or vines, or pomegranates, nor is there any water to drink!”

So Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the entrance of the tent of meeting, and fell with their faces to the ground. And the glory of the

LORD appeared to them. Then the LORD spoke to Moses: “Take the staff and assemble the community, you and Aaron your brother, and then speak to the rock before their eyes. It will pour out its water; you will bring water out of the rock for them, and so you will give the community and their animals water to drink.”

So Moses took the staff from before the LORD, just as he commanded him. Then Moses and Aaron gathered the community together in front of the rock, and he said to them, “Listen, you rebels, must we bring water out of this rock for you?” Then Moses raised his hand and struck the rock twice with his staff, and water came out abundantly, so the community drank, and their animals.

But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not trust me enough to show me as holy before the Israelites, therefore you will not bring this community into the land I have given them.” These are the waters of Meribah, because the Israelites contended with the Lord, and his holiness was maintained among them.

Read 1 Corinthians 10:1–4

For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they were all drinking from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ.

The Apostle Paul goes on to say that the Israelites' complaints and doubts were recorded as examples for us—not to fall into the common temptation of believing that God is not enough.

Reflection Questions

How does seeing Christ as your “rock” change your understanding of His role in your life?

(Reflect on what it means for Jesus to be your source, sustainer, and strength.)

Where do you need His strength and sustenance today?
(Identify an area of your life that feels like a wilderness—where you need God to provide.)

How have you responded in the past when you felt desperate or spiritually dry?

(Have you turned to God, or tried to solve things on your own? What was the result?)

Action Step

What is one practical way you can rely on Christ as your Rock this week?

With whom will you share what you are learning or experiencing?

(Write your commitment or plan, and consider sharing it with a friend or your group.)

Prayer Focus

Father:

Thank You for being my protector and provider. When I am in the wilderness, remind me that You are near and able to meet every need.

Son:

Jesus, You are my Rock and my salvation. Help me stand firm in You, trusting that You are present even when I feel alone or desperate.

Spirit:

Holy Spirit, strengthen my faith and remind me of God's faithfulness in every wilderness. Open my eyes to see Jesus as my true source and sustainer.

(Pause to pray silently or aloud, and lift up any specific needs for strength and provision.)

For Further Study

Read the following related passages. Write out the scriptures to practicing hearing from God and respond with a few lines as well.

- Psalm 18:2
- Psalm 78:15–16
- Isaiah 48:21

Chapter Three

Streams in the Desert

We all know what it's like to feel unwanted or overlooked, but there's a unique ache when someone you love looks you in the eye and asks, "You don't enjoy me anymore, do you?" How do you answer a question like that—especially when it's clear you've been looking elsewhere for attention, enjoyment, or satisfaction? If you've ever experienced this in a human relationship, you know how destabilizing and vulnerable it feels. It's a moment that exposes hidden longings and unmet needs, and it can shake you to your core.

I'll never forget when God asked me that question. Imagine the horror: I'm a pastor, and had been for a decade, and God has the nerve to ask, "You don't enjoy me anymore, do you?" He didn't need to wait for my answer. My schedule, my distractions, and my habits made it clear: I wasn't looking to Him for refreshment. Through the prophet Jeremiah, God pressed the question deeper: "Am I a desert to you?" (Jeremiah 2:31). It was as if God was saying, "You don't seem to seek me out anymore—just enough for your ministry methods and

programs. But I didn't call you to myself for what you could do for me; I called you to myself for myself."

If you've ever found yourself looking for satisfaction in the wrong places, you're not alone. God's people have struggled with this for generations. The prophet Jeremiah's words are as relevant now as they were then. We chase after things that promise to fill us—career achievements, possessions, relationships, even good things like ministry or service—only to find that these "wells" often leave us emptier than before.

Imagine a world where people walk around looking spiritually dehydrated—parched, weary, and desperate for something that will truly satisfy. Sometimes, we try to quench that thirst with anything we can find: achievement, possessions, relationships, distraction. I've seen it in my own life and in others: we reach for comfort, affirmation, or escape, only to find ourselves more depleted. The tragedy is not just in our thirst, but in the substitutes we settle for—cracked cisterns that can't hold water.

Yet in those dry places, God meets us—not with shame, but with an invitation to return to Him, the true source. He is not a desert. He is the fountain of living water.

Take a moment to reflect: When have you tried to fill a deep need with something other than God? What was the result? How did God meet you in that place of dryness?

Key Passage: God's Offer vs. Our Cisterns

During their wilderness journey, the Israelites experienced God's provision in remarkable ways—streams of water flowing from rocks, rivers appearing in wastelands. In those harsh conditions, they couldn't rely on the usual solution for survival in the ancient world:

digging cisterns. A cistern was a large, stone-lined reservoir carved into the earth, designed to collect and store rainwater during the dry seasons. While practical, cistern water was always stagnant, and if the plaster cracked, the water would leak out, leaving only mud or emptiness behind.

Instead of depending on man-made storage, the Israelites had to trust God for fresh, daily provision—water that followed them, showing up exactly when they needed it most. This was more than just a physical miracle; it was a spiritual lesson about dependence on God as the true, living source.

Yet, time and again, both the Israelites and we today are tempted to dig our own “cisterns”—to create man-made solutions, coping strategies, or idols that promise to hold what we need but ultimately leave us dry and disappointed. Today, our ‘cisterns’ might be our careers, relationships, achievements, or even good things like ministry—anything we rely on for satisfaction apart from God. The prophet Jeremiah uses this powerful image to confront God’s people: instead of coming to God, the fountain of living water, they were settling for substitutes that could never satisfy.

In the next passages, you’ll see God’s heartbreak and invitation—He longs to be our source, not just one option among many. He promises to do a new thing: to make streams in the desert, to provide living water in the very places we feel most empty.

Let’s look at how God addresses this through the prophet Jeremiah and other scriptures.

Read Jeremiah 2:12–13, Isaiah 43:19–20, and Psalm 78:15–16

Be amazed at this, O heavens! Be shocked and utterly dumbfounded, says the LORD. For my people have committed two evils: They have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and they have dug cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water.

Look, I am about to do something new. Now it begins to happen! Do you not recognize it? Yes, I will make a road in the wilderness and paths in the wastelands. The wild animals of the desert honor me, the jackals and ostriches, because I put water in the wilderness and streams in the wastelands, to give drink to my chosen people.

He broke open rocks in the wilderness, and gave them enough water to fill the depths of the sea. He caused streams to flow from the rock, and made the water flow down like rivers.

Reflection Questions

What are some “cracked cisterns” or false sources of satisfaction you have turned to in the past?

(Be honest about habits, patterns, or things you’ve relied on for comfort or fulfillment.)

Where have you seen God provide streams in your own desert places?

(Reflect on a time when God met you in a place of need or dryness.)

What might it look like to leave behind your cracked cisterns and trust God for living water today?

(Consider both attitudes and practical steps.)

Action Step

What is one practical way you will turn from a “cracked cistern” and seek God’s living water this week? With whom will you share what you’re learning or experiencing?

(Write your commitment or plan, and consider telling a friend or your group.)

Prayer Focus

Father:

Forgive me for seeking satisfaction apart from You. Open my eyes to the places I've settled for less, and help me return to You, the fountain of living water.

Son:

Jesus, fill my life with Your living water. Quench my deepest thirst and overflow in me, so I may experience Your abundance.

Spirit:

Holy Spirit, reveal the “cracked cisterns” I need to leave behind. Lead me back to the true Source, and give me courage to trust God’s provision.

(Pause for silent prayer or pray aloud together.)

For Further Study

Read the following related passages. Write out the scriptures to practicing hearing from God and respond with a few lines as well.

- Psalm 36:7–9

- Isaiah 55:1–3

- John 7:37–38

Chapter Four

From Duty to Delight

Much of my calendar is filled with routine and responsibility—meetings, errands, emails, and the endless cycle of tasks that keep life moving. These things are necessary, but they rarely spark joy. Yet every so often, something leaps off the page. My father-in-law doesn't have to ask me twice if I want to go to Cabo with him. The answer is always yes. Whatever is on my schedule can be shifted—some invitations are just too good to pass up. The anticipation alone is energizing.

There's also a weekly gathering I treasure: a handful of men from around my city, meeting around a campfire. There's good food, honest conversation, and the kind of laughter that lingers. We share stories, struggles, and support each other in the broken places of life. That gathering practically pulses on my calendar—a beacon of warmth and belonging in a world that can feel cold and transactional.

C.S. Lewis, in his essay “The Inner Ring,” describes our deep, sometimes desperate desire to be included—to be in the room where

it happens, to belong to the “inner circle.” I think of those social moments when you’re talking to someone, but their eyes keep drifting over your shoulder, searching for someone more important. We all want to be chosen, to be wanted, to be invited in.

You *have* been invited in to a proper feast.

Many of us, if we’re honest, approach God with a sense of duty or obligation. Faith becomes another appointment to keep, another box to check, another task on a crowded to-do list. But Jesus invites us to something entirely different: a feast, not just a rulebook. The Kingdom is described as a treasure worth everything, a banquet for the hungry, a party for the lost who are found. His invitation is not for the worthy, but for the willing; not for the accomplished, but for the hungry.

When was the last time you said “yes” to God’s invitation with delight, not just out of obligation? Can you remember a time when faith felt like a feast—a “yes” that shone on your calendar, not just another duty?

As we turn to the words of Jesus, consider what it would mean for you to move from obligation to joyful invitation in your walk with Him.

Key Passage: The Invitation of Jesus

Jesus never intended the life of faith to be a checklist of religious obligations. Again and again, He paints a picture of the Kingdom as a feast, a treasure, a celebration—a place where joy and abundance overflow. The invitation of Jesus is not just to follow rules or keep up appearances, but to discover something so valuable, so life-changing, that we would gladly rearrange our lives to have it. John Eldredge, in *Beautiful Outlaw*, describes this as the difference between duty and

delight: Jesus invites us into a romance, a banquet, a deep union with Him that awakens our deepest longings and satisfies our souls. This is not a call to strive harder, but to receive—like being handed an invitation to a party you never dreamed you'd be included in. The Kingdom is for the hungry, the thirsty, the ones willing to say yes to joy.

Jesus wants us to know that His invitation isn't reserved for the spiritual elite or the religiously accomplished—it's for anyone willing to say yes. As we listen to His parables and promises, let's open our hearts to the possibility that God's greatest gifts are offered freely, and that the only requirement is a willingness to come.

Read Matthew 13:44–46 and Revelation 22:16–17

The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure, hidden in a field, that a person found and hid. Then because of joy he went and sold all that he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When he found a pearl of great value, he went out and sold everything he had and bought it.

“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star!” The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let the one who hears say: “Come!” And let the one who is thirsty

come; let the one who wants it take the water of life free of charge.

Reflection Questions

What does it mean to you that Jesus invites you to a feast, not just a duty?

(Reflect on how this changes your approach to God.)

Where do you sense Jesus inviting you to deeper intimacy or joy right now?

(Consider areas where you've felt obligation or resistance.)

How can you respond to Jesus' invitation this week?

(What would it look like to say "yes" to Him?)

Action Step

What is one way you will accept Jesus' invitation to the feast this week?

With whom will you share this invitation or insight?

Prayer Focus

Father:

Thank You for inviting me into Your presence, not as a servant but as a beloved child. Help me to receive Your invitation with joy.

Son:

Jesus, You are the treasure worth everything. Draw my heart to You, and let me find my deepest satisfaction in Your presence.

Spirit:

Holy Spirit, awaken in me a hunger for God's Kingdom. Remove any sense of mere obligation and fill me with joy in following Jesus.

(Pause for prayer or silent reflection.)

For Further Study

Read the following related passages. Write out the scriptures to practicing hearing from God and respond with a few lines as well.

• Isaiah 55:1–3

• Luke 14:15–24

• Psalm 34:8–10

Chapter Five

Is God Holding Back?

Why is it so hard to let go of our perspective? Why do we cling so tightly to the narratives we've built—about the world, about ourselves, and, perhaps most stubbornly, about God? Even when I open my Bible, I notice how often I read it to reinforce what I already believe, rather than letting it read me and challenge the script I've been running in my head.

For many of us, that script is a story of scarcity and self-reliance. Everything around us whispers that we're on our own, that no one can truly be trusted—not even God. We rehearse old disappointments and wonder if He's holding out on us.

I know I have. For years, my default was to see life as a series of tests—opportunities to get it right, to avoid God's discipline, to prove I was worthy of His blessing. Deep down, I was always waiting for the other shoe to drop.

But then God confronted me with Psalm 84:11 that cut through all my defenses:

For the LORD God is our sovereign protector. The Lord bestows favor and honor; he withholds no good thing from those who have integrity.

That promise ran counter to everything I'd been rehearsing in my mind. It was as if God was saying, "You've been living as if I'm stingy, as if I'm waiting for you to mess up so I can withhold good from you. But that's not who I am." Perfection isn't possible, so it cannot be the goal. But to walk in integrity—that is possible. And look at the promise: He does not withhold good from His children.

One of the enemy's greatest weapons is to get us to doubt the goodness of God. The battle isn't just out there in the world; it's in our hearts and minds, in the scripts we run and the voices we listen to.

What if God really is as good as He says He is? What if the deepest longing of your heart is met, not by striving or earning, but by receiving what He longs to give?

All of creation joins in the praise of God, as Psalm 148 declares—from the heights of heaven to the depths of the sea, every creature gives Him glory. Could it be that God isn't holding out on us at all? Maybe we are the ones holding out on Him, while the rest of creation freely responds in worship and trust.

Key Passage: The Lie from the Garden and the Truth of God's Provision

As we turn to Scripture, we see that the enemy's first tactic in the Garden was to plant doubt about God's goodness. This isn't just a story about Adam and Eve—it's the oldest battle in the human heart.

From the very beginning, the serpent whispers that God is holding out on us, that He can't be trusted to give what is best. That suspicion lingers in every generation.

Yet, throughout the arc of Scripture, God reveals Himself again and again as a generous Father, our ever-present help, and the One who satisfies our deepest needs. When Moses led the Israelites through the wilderness, God provided manna from heaven and water from the rock—miraculous signs that He would not abandon His people or let them go hungry or thirsty. Moses learned to depend on God's provision, not just for daily bread, but for every step of the journey.

Centuries later, David—the poet and king—sang of God as a sun and shield, the giver of favor and honor, promising that “no good thing does He withhold from those who walk with integrity.” David’s psalms are full of longing, but also full of confidence that God’s heart is for His people, not against them. Even in seasons of waiting, disappointment, or loss, David returned to the truth that God’s presence is the greatest gift, and that His goodness can be trusted.

The apostle Paul picks up this theme in the New Testament, declaring that God’s generosity is most clearly seen in Jesus. “He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, freely give us all things?” Paul’s words remind us that the cross is the ultimate answer to the lie that God withholds good from us. In Christ, God has already given us the greatest gift; every lesser gift is a sign of His ongoing kindness.

From Moses to David to Paul, the story of Scripture is the story of a God who moves toward us, who provides, who delights to give, and who invites us to trust Him—even when our circumstances tempt us to believe otherwise. The invitation is to let go of our old scripts of fear and scarcity, and to let God rewrite our story with His abundant, generous love—ultimately revealed in Jesus.

Read Genesis 3:1–6, Psalm 46:1, and Philippians 4:19

Now the serpent was more shrewd than any of the wild animals that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Is it really true that God said, ‘You must not eat from any tree of the orchard?’” The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit from the trees of the orchard; but concerning the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the orchard God said, ‘You must not eat from it, and you must not touch it, or else you will die.’” The serpent said to the woman, “Surely you will not die, for God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will open and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” When the woman saw that the tree produced fruit that was good for food, was attractive to the eye, and was desirable for making one wise, she took some of its fruit and ate it. She also gave some of it to her husband who was with her, and he ate it.

God is our strong refuge; he is truly our helper in times of trouble.

And my God will supply your every need according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Reflection Questions

Where in your life have you felt that God might be holding out on you?

(Be honest about disappointments, doubts, or unanswered prayers.)

How does the story of Eden echo in your own spiritual journey?
(Reflect on the ways the enemy's lie may have influenced your thinking.)

What truths about God's character and promises help you trust Him more fully?

(Consider specific scriptures or experiences.)

Action Step

What is one way you will choose to trust God's goodness this week, even when you don't see immediate answers? With whom will you share your journey of trust?

Prayer Focus

Father:

Thank You for being a generous provider, never withholding what is truly good. Help me to trust Your heart, even when I don't understand Your ways.

Son:

Jesus, reveal to me the fullness of Your love and provision. Teach me to rest in Your finished work and not in my own striving.

Spirit:

Holy Spirit, expose any lies I've believed about God's character. Fill me with faith and confidence in God's goodness and sufficiency.

(Pause for prayer or silent reflection.)

For Further Study

Read the following related passages. Write out the scriptures to practicing hearing from God and respond with a few lines as well.

- James 1:16-18

- Matthew 7:7–11

- Romans 8:31–32

Chapter Six

Wholehearted Love

When we do a health check, we quickly realize that our lives are made up of many interconnected parts. We are physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and spiritual beings. Our schedules often reflect this: alongside productive work, we make time for friendships, athletics, art, food, learning, and rest, hoping to be “well-rounded” and fully human. We try to keep all these cylinders firing, believing that’s what it takes for our lives to run smoothly.

Sometimes, my own low moods or seasons of depression are like warning lights on the dashboard, signaling that something deeper needs attention. They remind me to pay attention to the basics of being human—engaging my mind, investing in relationships, getting outdoors, and caring for my body. But even as I try to balance these different aspects, I’m challenged by a deeper question: how do they all fit together? Is my spiritual life just one compartment among many, or is there a deeper integration I’m missing?

It's easy to slip into the mindset that we are simply "a spirit in a body" or a "ghost in the machine"—that faith is just one part of a larger whole. But the biblical vision is far more holistic. The Hebrew mindset, especially in the Old Testament, sees us as a unified soul—a *nephesh*. We are not spirits trapped in bodies, but living, breathing souls, experiencing life as an integrated whole. Our life with God is not just a slice of the pie; it is the whole thing.

This means that every part of our lives—our thoughts, emotions, relationships, work, even our aches and pains—can be places of encounter with God. When my back aches, do I just complain, or do I talk to Him about it? When I'm wrestling with a tough decision, do I invite God into the process, or do I keep Him at arm's length, confining Him to "spiritual" matters?

I remember many seasons when my faith was compartmentalized—just another box on my weekly checklist. It didn't look or feel like wholehearted allegiance. I had my "God time," but the rest of my life felt disconnected, as if faith was confined to certain hours or activities rather than woven through everything I did.

One of the biggest breakthroughs for me came when I read Brother Lawrence's classic, *Practicing the Presence of God*. He described an ordinary life transformed by a continual awareness of God's nearness—finding God not just in church or prayer, but in the kitchen, at work, and in every mundane moment. His example challenged me to see my relationship with God as something that could touch every part of who I am.

That's when real transformation began. I realized God's invitation is not for a trickle of devotion, but for a life overflowing with love—heart, soul, mind, and strength. Wholehearted love means letting God into every room of your life, not just the "spiritual" ones. It's about living in constant relationship with Him, letting His presence

shape your thoughts, your work, your relationships, and even your rest.

Key Passage: The Greatest Commandment

When asked which commandment was the greatest, Jesus pointed to the *Shema*—a call to love God with every part of our being. This is not about mere religious activity, but about offering our whole selves to the One who offers His whole self to us. Jesus shows us that obedience and love are inseparable: to love God is to love those who bear His image, and to love those around us is to reflect our allegiance to God. This is a whole-person commitment—body, mind, soul, and relationships—woven together in the greatest commandment.

Read Deuteronomy 6:4–5 and Mark 12:28–31

Listen, Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! You must love the LORD your God with your whole mind, your whole being, and all your strength.

One of the experts in the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with

all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

Reflection Questions

In what ways have you compartmentalized your faith?
(Where is it easiest/hardest to invite God into your daily life?)

What does it look like for you to love God with your whole heart, soul, mind, and strength?
(Be specific about each area.)

How might your relationship with God change if you offered Him all of who you are?
(What would you gain? What might you fear losing?)

Action Step

What is one area of your life you will intentionally offer to God this week? With whom will you share your commitment or experience?

Prayer Focus

Father:

Thank You for loving me with Your whole heart. Help me to love You with all that I am and invite You into every part of my life.

Son:

Jesus, thank You for showing me what whole-hearted devotion looks like. Teach me to love others as You have loved me.

Spirit:

Holy Spirit, reveal any areas I'm holding back. Empower me to offer my whole self to God and to receive His fullness in return.

For Further Study

Read the following related passages. Write out the scriptures to practicing hearing from God and respond with a few lines as well.

- Psalm 63:1, 3–5

- Romans 12:1–2

- Isaiah 58:11

Chapter Seven

How You Best Meet with Jesus

Mountain biking is one of the ways I connect my whole self together: to God. For some, that might sound like a recipe for falling apart—believe me, I've had my share of crashes! But there's something about winding up a mountain path and seeing the entrance to the downhill section of the mountain. We pause to catch our breath, secure the safety equipment, and shout out gratitude to God: "Thank you for letting us play in your forest, Abba. It's a good day to be your son!" As I head down the trail, I find myself praying, "God, remind every synapse and sinew to serve me well right now. Help my feet, knees, legs, hips, and arms all work together so I can enjoy this ride." This is why I climbed the mountain in the first place—the downhill connection with Jesus. For me, when everything is firing, it's pure worship.

Think about a time when you felt especially close to God. Where were you? What were you doing? Was it in a sanctuary, a study, a kitchen, a garden, or on a mountain? Not everyone connects with God

in the same way. Gary Thomas, in his book *Sacred Pathways*, teaches that God has wired each of us uniquely to meet with Him. Some find God in nature, others in study, service, worship, or silence. For some, it's art or music; for others, it's activism or contemplation.

Recognizing your “sacred pathway” is about discovering how God designed you to experience His presence and love—not just copying someone else’s spiritual routine, but embracing the ways He made your heart come alive. Thomas identifies nine different pathways: Naturalists (loving God outdoors), Sensates (loving God with the senses), Traditionalists (loving God through ritual and symbol), Ascetics (loving God in solitude and simplicity), Activists (loving God through confrontation and justice), Caregivers (loving God by loving others), Enthusiasts (loving God with mystery and celebration), Contemplatives (loving God through adoration), and Intellectuals (loving God with the mind).

This isn’t about spiritual superiority or finding the “best” way to connect with God. It’s about freedom and invitation. As John Eldredge writes, God is not interested in mere duty—He’s after our desire, our delight, our hearts fully alive. The adventure of faith is discovering what stirs your soul and pursuing God there, knowing He delights to meet you in the places He’s designed you to thrive.

Key Passage: God’s Unique Design

The Psalms remind us that God knows us intimately—every longing, every strength, every quirk. Psalm 139 paints a picture of a God who formed us with care and purpose, weaving together our minds, hearts, and bodies before we ever took a breath.

Jesus echoes this intimacy in John’s Gospel: He is the Good Shepherd

who knows each sheep by name and calls us to follow Him in the unique ways He's made us.

You are not a random collection of traits; you are a masterpiece, designed for relationship with your Creator. God's design is not generic or distant—it's deeply personal. He knows how to speak to your heart in a way no one else can, and He delights when you respond in the way He's made you to respond.

Discovering your “sacred pathway” (as Gary Thomas describes it) is about recognizing these fingerprints of God in your life. It’s about noticing where you sense His presence most clearly, and giving yourself permission to pursue Him there. Your pathway may not look like anyone else’s, and that’s part of the beauty of God’s creativity.

As you read these passages, consider: Where do you most naturally hear God’s voice? How has He uniquely woven together your desires, strengths, and ways of connecting with Him?

Read Psalm 139:13–16 and John 10:27–28

Certainly you made my mind and heart; you wove me together in my mother’s womb. I will give you thanks because your deeds are awesome and amazing. You knew me thoroughly; my bones were not hidden from you, when I was made in secret and sewed together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw me when I was inside the womb. All the days ordained for me were recorded in your scroll before one of them came into existence.

My sheep listen to my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish; no one will snatch them from my hand.

Reflection Questions

What activities or environments most help you sense God's presence?
(Nature, study, worship, service, solitude, etc.)

How has God uniquely wired you to connect with Him?
(Reflect on past experiences and what stirs your heart for God.)

How can you honor your own pathway while respecting the ways others meet with Jesus?
(What might you learn from someone with a different pathway?)

Action Step

What is one new or renewed spiritual practice you will try this week to meet with Jesus? With whom will you share your experience or invite to join you?

Prayer Focus

Father:

Thank You for creating me with a unique design and purpose. Help me to embrace the ways You've made me to connect with You.

Son:

Jesus, thank You for calling me by name. Teach me to listen for Your voice and to follow You closely.

Spirit:

Holy Spirit, guide me as I explore new ways of meeting with God. Give me courage to step out and grace to celebrate others' pathways too.

For Further Study

Read the following related passages. Write out the scriptures to practicing hearing from God and respond with a few lines as well.

- 1 Corinthians 12:4–7

- Psalm 23

- Matthew 11:28–30

Chapter Eight

Companions on the Way

I 'm a verbal processor—talking with others about my journey with Jesus strengthens both my commitment and my energy for obedience. I regularly ask people to hold me accountable, and sometimes that even happens while I'm preaching. There are moments when I'm reading scripture and suddenly realize it's reading me—and I know I need a community to help me live this out. Following Jesus is not a solo project.

You might think, "Well, that's easy for you; you live a public life and lots of people know you." But you'd be surprised how often people give me a pass, assuming I'm following Jesus simply because I'm a pastor. I once quit an accountability group because they too easily gave me a "pastor pass." It took just one comment to know that season was over: "Well, Aaron, I know you don't have a problem with this because you're a pastor, but do any of you others struggle to read the scripture daily?" Well, actually at that point I read my Bible mostly for preparing lessons not for personal connection with Jesus. It was time to pursue

companions that would assume my intention to follow Jesus but not assume I was following through.

God has blessed me with several close brothers I can reveal everything to—but I’ve had to seek them out and stay faithful to them over decades. None of this happens without tenacious effort. True spiritual companionship and accountability don’t just fall into our laps; they require intentional pursuit, honesty, and mutual commitment. We need others to lift us when we fall, encourage us when we’re weary, and challenge us when we drift. Spiritual friendship is not a one-way street; it’s about giving and receiving, walking side by side, and holding each other up in the rhythms of faith.

Recall a time you grew in faith because of another person’s encouragement or partnership. What made that relationship meaningful?

The journey of faith is not meant to be walked alone. Jesus sent His disciples out in pairs, and the early church thrived through shared life, mutual encouragement, and accountability. We need spiritual companions to help us persevere, to sharpen us as “iron sharpens iron,” and to remind us that we’re never meant to do this alone.

Key Passage: Companions on the Journey

Picture this: on the very day of Jesus’ resurrection, two disciples are walking the road to Emmaus from Jerusalem, processing their grief and confusion. Suddenly, Jesus Himself draws near and joins their conversation. What unfolds is more than a Bible study—it’s a living encounter. As they walk and talk, Jesus opens the Scriptures to them, and their hearts begin to burn with recognition and hope. This moment reminds us that spiritual companionship—honest conversation, shared questions, and mutual encouragement—can open our eyes to Jesus in ways we might never experience alone.

Imagine the intimacy and transformation that came, not only from knowing Jesus, but from sharing the journey and the stories of that remarkable day. The wisdom of Ecclesiastes is hard bitten realism about the vaporous nature of life under the sun but he provides a highlight on this journey. The author echoes this truth: companionship isn't just about support in hard times; it's about shared discovery, deeper insight, and the joy of walking together.

Read Luke 24:13–32 and Ecclesiastes 4:9–12

Now that very day two of them were on their way to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking to each other about all the things that had happened. While they were talking and debating these things, Jesus himself approached and began to accompany them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

He said to them, “What are these matters you are discussing so intently as you walk along?” And they stood still, looking sad... One of them, named Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who doesn't know the things that have happened there in these days?” He said to them, “What things?”...

They replied, “The things concerning Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet powerful in word and deed before God and all the people... but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel...”

Then Jesus said to them, “You foolish people—how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Wasn’t it necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and enter into his glory?” Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things written about himself in all the scriptures...

As they approached the village to which they were going, he acted as though he wanted to go farther. But they urged him, “Stay with us, because it is getting toward evening and the day is almost done.” So he went in to stay with them. When he had taken his place at the table with them, he took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. At this point their eyes were opened and they recognized him. Then he vanished out of their sight.

They said to each other, “Didn’t our hearts burn within us while he was speaking with us on the road, while he was explaining the scriptures to us?”...

Two people are better than one, because they can reap more benefit from their labor. For if they fall, one will help his companion up, but pity the person who falls down and has no one to help him up! Furthermore, if two lie down together, they can keep each other warm, but how can one person keep warm by himself? Although an assailant may overpower one person, two can withstand him. Moreover, a three-stranded cord is not quickly broken...

Reflection Questions

Who has been a spiritual companion or encourager in your life?
(What did you learn from them?)

How has walking with others deepened your experience of Jesus?
(Share a story or insight.)

What qualities make for a good spiritual companion?
(Think about trust, honesty, shared purpose, etc.)

Action Step

Who will you invite to join you on your faith journey this week? How will you encourage or support them? If you don't have a spiritual companion right now, what is one step you could take to seek out or initiate this kind of relationship?

Prayer Focus

Father:

Thank You for the gift of community and friendship. Please bring to mind those I can reach out to. Help me to value and invest in relationships that draw me closer to You.

Son:

Jesus, thank You for walking with me and for sending others to walk beside me. Teach me to be a faithful companion to others.

Spirit:

Holy Spirit, lead me to those who need encouragement and help me to build up the body of Christ in love.

For Further Study

Read the following related passages. Write out the scriptures to practicing hearing from God and respond with a few lines as well.

- Hebrews 10:23–25

- Proverbs 27:17

- Colossians 3:12–17

Chapter Nine

Living Like a Well-Watered Garden

My mother was the daughter of a florist and gardener, so our lives were always full of produce and beauty. My dad grew up tending orchards, and we maintained those connections to get the best of the crops—peaches, cherries—that my mom would preserve for the winter. My dad couldn’t stand store-bought canned fruit; it was either too sour or too bland. We lived off the produce of gardens.

The best I’ve done in producing vegetables is a cherry tomato that volunteered to come back for a few years. Heather and I started a Covid project of hardscaping our backyard. We had a hillside covered in ivy before we terraced it and built flower beds with the kids. We spent the time to integrate irrigation because we needed an automatic system to keep it watered. Now, five years later, we have mature plants that come back every year and welcome the birds and bees to enjoy the sweetness of a beautiful garden.

But there have also been seasons when I felt like I was living on spiritual “leftovers”—just enough to get by, but not truly flourishing. Maybe you’ve been there too: surviving on scraps of joy or peace, feeling spiritually dry, or settling for a faith that’s more about maintenance than growth. God’s vision for us isn’t scarcity, but abundance. He desires that we become like well-watered gardens—thriving, not just surviving.

Think back on a time when you felt depleted, running on empty, or living off “leftovers” in your walk with God. What did that season look like? What changed when you began to experience spiritual abundance?

Key Passage: God’s Abundant Provision

Genesis tells us we are made in the image of a creative, generous God. From the beginning, we’re called not just to survive, but to flourish—to bear fruit, to create beauty, and to care for the world alongside Him. Our original design is for a life that reflects His abundance.

Throughout Scripture, God promises not only to meet our needs, but to make us like well-watered gardens—overflowing with life and fruitfulness. The world offers noisy abundance that quickly fades, but God’s refreshment is quiet, steady, and powerful. His abundance is not just about material provision, but about the soul’s capacity for joy, beauty, creativity, and love. Even in seasons of waiting or sorrow, God’s invitation is to move from a mindset of scarcity to one of trust—believing He is the source who makes gardens flourish, even after the driest winters.

In Isaiah 58, God’s promise of abundance comes in the context of a call to justice, compassion, and true worship. He invites His people to care for the hungry, the oppressed, and the vulnerable—and then

promises Himself as the solution to their dry parched prospects. God's abundance flows through lives that are open to His purposes.

As you read these passages, notice both the promise and the path to flourishing in God's care.

Read Isaiah 58:5-11 and Psalm 23:1–3, 5–6

Is this really the kind of fasting I want? Do I want a day when people merely humble themselves, bowing their heads like a reed and stretching out on sackcloth and ashes? Is this really what you call a fast, a day that is pleasing to the LORD?

No, this is the kind of fast I want. I want you to remove the sinful chains, to tear away the ropes of the burdensome yoke, to set free the oppressed, and to break every burdensome yoke. I want you to share your food with the hungry and to provide shelter for homeless, oppressed people. When you see someone naked, clothe him! Don't turn your back on your own flesh and blood! Then your light will shine like the sunrise; your restoration will quickly arrive; your godly behavior will go before you, and the LORD's splendor will be your rear guard.

Then you will call out, and the LORD will respond; you will cry out, and he will reply, ‘Here I am.’ You must remove the burdensome yoke from among you and stop pointing fingers and speaking sinfully. You must actively help the hungry and feed the oppressed. Then your light will dispel the darkness, and your darkness will be transformed into noonday. The LORD will continually lead you; he will feed you even in parched regions. He will give you renewed strength, and you will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring that continually produces water.

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He takes me to lush pastures, he leads me to refreshing water. He restores my strength. He leads me down the right paths for the sake of his reputation.

You prepare a feast before me in plain sight of my enemies. You refresh my head with oil; my cup is completely full. Surely your goodness and faithfulness will pursue me all my days, and I will live in the LORD's house for the rest of my life.

Reflection Questions

Where do you sense scarcity or “just enough” in your spiritual life?
(Be honest about areas where you feel dry or depleted.)

Isaiah 58 links God's promise of abundance to caring for the hungry, the oppressed, and the vulnerable. Where might God be inviting you to move beyond self-focus and serve others? (Is there a person or group in need that you sense God prompting you to help?)

How have you experienced God's abundance or "overflow" in the past?

(Share a story or memory.)

What would it look like for you to become a "well-watered garden" in your relationships and community?

(How could you partner with others—like the companions on the way—to bring God's abundance to those around you?)

Action Step

What is one step you will take this week to move from scarcity to abundance in your walk with God, especially by caring for someone in need? Who will you invite to join you or encourage you in this?

Prayer Focus

Father:

I confess I have often settled for spiritual leftovers and ignored the needs of others. Forgive me for choosing comfort over compassion and for holding back what You've given me. Thank You for being the source of all abundance. Lead me to trust Your provision and to share it freely.

Son:

Jesus, forgive me for trying to fill my cup with things that do not satisfy and for walking past those in need. Teach me to follow Your example of sacrificial love and to see others through Your eyes. Fill me with Your compassion and courage to serve.

Spirit:

Holy Spirit, I confess my scarcity mindset and fear of not having enough. Break through my self-protection and empower me to overflow with Your life. Help me to notice and respond to those in need, so I may become a well-watered garden for others.

For Further Study

Read the following related passages. Write out the scriptures to practicing hearing from God and respond with a few lines as well.

- John 10:10

- Psalm 36:7–9

- Ezekiel 47:1–12

Chapter Ten

What Are You Feeding On?

There's a whole science—and a multi-billion dollar industry—devoted to selling you food that's quick, easy, and not good for you. U.S. grocery stores alone spent over \$2 billion on advertising in 2023, and that's just the tip of the iceberg. Food marketing isn't just commercials—it's woven into movies, TV shows, and even the layout of grocery stores, all designed to shape your cravings. Grocery stores are laid out to maximize profit and impulse buys, with the most addictive snacks and sugary drinks right at the checkout, where your hunger and decision fatigue are at their peak.

Behind the scenes, big food companies cut secretive deals and offer kickbacks to stores and cafeterias to push their products front and center—often the most processed, least nutritious options. The more prominent the placement, the more likely you are to reach for it, especially when you're hungry or stressed. Do you remember the last advertisement from Big Broccoli? Neither do I. The healthiest choices rarely get the loudest marketing.

It's no wonder they say the worst time to go shopping is when you're hungry. Your brain is on fire, looking for satisfaction, and all the best-looking junk food is waiting for you at the checkout stand.

Just as junk food can satisfy for a moment but leave us feeling worse, spiritual "junk food" offers quick fixes but no lasting nourishment. What are the "junk foods" you're tempted to reach for instead of God's true provision? Is it distraction, busyness, approval, entertainment, or something else?

More than the food on the table, let's consider who is inviting us to the table. It's easy to treat God's invitation like a buffet: we come for what's on the table, fill our plates, and then rush off to the next thing. Imagine being invited to a lavish meal by someone who loves you deeply—your parents, perhaps—and showing up with a stack of to-go containers, planning to grab the food and leave before the conversation even starts. Too often, we come to God for answers, blessings, or comfort, but rush away before we ever linger in His presence. We dine and dash, thinking the real gift is the meal, not the company.

But the Master's invitation is not just to the food—it's to Himself. The feast is a signpost pointing to the Host. Jesus doesn't just offer bread; He says, "I am the Bread of Life." The true gift is relationship, presence, and union with Him. The tragedy of spiritual junk food is not only that it leaves us empty, but that it distracts us from the One who alone can satisfy our deepest hunger.

When we settle for what's on the table but miss the Host, we miss the whole point of the invitation. The feast is meant to draw us to the Giver, not just the gifts.

Key Passage: True Nourishment vs. Empty Calories

God knows our hunger—and He knows how easily we settle for what's quick, easy, or familiar, even when it doesn't truly satisfy. But His invitation is radically different: He calls us to a feast that fills not just our stomachs, but our souls. Through the prophet Isaiah and in Jesus' own words, we're challenged to look honestly at what we're feeding our hearts and to come to the only table that truly satisfies. These passages invite us to listen for God's voice, to recognize the emptiness of substitutes, and to receive the Bread of Life Himself. Read the full chapters, if you please, as the following quotations leave a lot of "food for thought" "on the table" if you'll pardon the pun.

Read Isaiah 55:1–3, 6-13 and John 6:35

Hey, all who are thirsty, come to the water! You who have no money, come! Buy and eat! ... Listen carefully to me and eat what is nourishing! ... Then I will make an unconditional covenantal promise to you, just like the reliable covenantal promises I made to David. ... Seek the LORD while he makes himself available; call to him while he is nearby! ... The wicked need to abandon their lifestyle and sinful people their plans. They should return to the LORD, and he will show mercy to them, and to their God, for he will freely forgive them. ... Indeed, my plans are not like your plans, neither are my deeds like your deeds, says the LORD. ... The rain and snow fall from the sky and

do not return, but instead water the earth and make it produce and yield crops ... In the same way, the promise that I make does not return to me, having accomplished nothing. ... Indeed you will go out with joy; you will be led along in peace; the mountains and hills will give a joyful shout before you, and all the trees in the field will clap their hands. ... Evergreens will grow in place of thorn bushes, firs will grow in place of nettles; they will be a monument to the LORD, a permanent reminder that will remain forever.

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. The one who comes to me will never go hungry, and the one who believes in me will never be thirsty.”

Reflection Questions

What kinds of “spiritual junk food” do you reach for when you’re hungry or stressed?

(Examples: distraction, busyness, approval, entertainment.)

How does God’s invitation in Isaiah 55 challenge your current patterns of seeking satisfaction?

(What stands out to you?)

What would it look like to “feed” on Jesus, the Bread of Life, in your daily routine?
(Be specific.)

Action Step

What is one “junk food” you will fast from this week, and what will you replace it with? Who will you share this commitment with?

Prayer Focus

Father:

I confess I have often settled for what is quick and easy, feeding my soul on things that do not last. Forgive me for seeking comfort in distractions or busyness instead of coming to Your table. Thank You for inviting me to a feast that truly satisfies. Teach me to hunger for what is good and lasting.

Son:

Jesus, Bread of Life, I admit I’ve looked elsewhere for satisfaction. Forgive my impatience and my habit of rushing past Your presence. Help me to come to You first and trust that only You can fill my deepest needs.

Spirit:

Holy Spirit, reveal where I’ve settled for spiritual “junk food.” Stir a fresh appetite in me for what is true and nourishing. Strengthen me

to turn from what is empty and lead me into deeper communion with You.

For Further Study

Read the following related passages. Write out the scriptures to practicing hearing from God and respond with a few lines as well.

- Matthew 4:1–4

- Psalm 81:10, 16

- Proverbs 27:7

Chapter Eleven

Freedom from False Beliefs

There's a moment in every believer's journey when you realize you've been living under a lie—about yourself, about God, or about what's possible in your circumstances. Sometimes these lies are subtle, woven into the fabric of our upbringing or reinforced by disappointment and pain. Other times, they're bold and obvious, but we feel powerless to break free. In my own life, I've found that spiritual freedom rarely happens by accident. It requires recognizing the agreements we've made—consciously or unconsciously—with the enemy's narrative, and then intentionally renouncing them in favor of God's truth.

Just the other day I said, "I'm an idiot!" Where did that come from? I know the voice of God—it may sound like my own, but it comes with a different perspective, surprising intelligence, and a whole lot of compassion. That voice didn't come from Him, so I won't agree with it. In fact, I need to say, "No, I don't agree with that." Sometimes we have thoughts that run through our minds like, "I will always..." or

“They will never...” and we nod in agreement: “I know, right?” But who are we agreeing with? Is it perhaps the enemy of our souls?

In *ROW Against the Flow*, I wrote about the power of naming and rejecting the current that tries to sweep us into conformity or despair. The world, our wounds, and the enemy all whisper, “This is just who you are. You’ll never change. God isn’t really for you.” But the gospel invites us to row against that flow—to resist, to renew our minds, and to anchor our identity in Christ.

John Bevere’s *The Bait of Satan* goes even deeper into the traps that keep us stuck: offense, bitterness, and the subtle agreements we make with hurt or pride. Bevere warns that offense is a trap baited by the enemy, and that holding onto it can imprison us in cycles of resentment and spiritual stagnation. He writes, “If we pick up [offense] and feed on it in our hearts, then we have become offended. Offended people produce much fruit, such as hurt, anger, outrage, jealousy, resentment, strife, bitterness, hatred, and envy.” The way out, he says, is through confession, repentance, and the renewing of our minds by God’s Word.

Spiritual freedom means naming the lie, renouncing our agreement with it, and declaring the truth of God’s Word over our lives. It’s not just about a one-time decision, but a daily practice of submitting to God, resisting the devil, and drawing near to Jesus.

Do you have experience with this? When have you realized you were believing a lie or living under a false agreement? How did you identify it, and what steps did you take to break free?

Key Passage: Breaking Free from False Agreements

Throughout Scripture, we are called to reject the lies of the enemy and stand firm in the truth of God’s Word. This isn’t just a metaphor—it’s

a daily reality. The enemy's oldest tactic is to plant accusations and false agreements, hoping we'll accept them as truth. Not every thought that crosses your mind is from God—or even from you.

Stasi Eldredge, in *Free to Live: The Utter Relief of Holiness*, writes, "We need to break every agreement we have made with Satan. With discouragement. Defeat. Despair. Loneliness. Rage. Self-hatred. Break agreements with it. Even if it feels true. Especially if it feels true! Repent of entertaining it, making room for it. Then send it to Jesus." Spiritual freedom means naming the lie, renouncing it, and replacing it with God's truth.

Confession and repentance aren't about shame, but about coming into the light and reclaiming our true identity as God's beloved. The New Testament calls us to submit to God and resist the devil (James 4), to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12), and to overcome the accuser by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony (Revelation 12).

As you read these passages, ask God to reveal any lies you've believed, agreements you need to break, and the truth He wants to speak over your life today.

Read James 4:7–8, Romans 12:1–2, and Revelation 12:10–11

So submit to God. But resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and make your hearts pure, you double-minded.

Therefore I exhort you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a sacrifice—alive, holy, and pleasing to God—which is your reasonable service. Do not be conformed to this present world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may test and approve what is the will of God—what is good and well-pleasing and perfect.

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

Reflection Questions

What are some lies or false agreements you have believed about yourself, God, or your circumstances?

(Be honest about any patterns that come to mind.)

How can you actively “renew your mind” with God’s truth this week?

(What steps can you take?)

Who can you invite to pray with you or support you as you break free from these agreements?
(Consider accountability.)

Action Step

Freedom is rarely found in isolation. Who can you invite to walk with you as you break old agreements and form new ones in Christ? What is one agreement you will renounce this week, and what truth will you declare in its place? Who will you share this with?

Prayer Focus

Father:

Thank You for Your truth that sets me free. Show me any lies I've believed and help me to walk in Your light.

Son:

Jesus, by Your blood I am forgiven and free. Give me courage to confess, renounce, and stand firm in Your victory.

Spirit:

Holy Spirit, renew my mind and fill me with truth. Help me break every agreement with lies and empower me to live in freedom—and to help others do the same.

For Further Study

Read the following related passages. Write out the scriptures to practicing hearing from God and respond with a few lines as well.

- 2 Corinthians 10:3–5

- Ephesians 6:10–18

- Psalm 51:6–12

Chapter Twelve

Becoming Living Water for Others

We are not blessed so that people will look at us and say, “Wow, look how blessed she is.” God’s blessing isn’t meant to pile up in our lives like water at the end of a cul-de-sac. We’re called to be a through street—a channel, not a reservoir. God’s vision is that His goodness and love would flow through us, not just to us.

If you want to experience more of God’s blessing, become a blessing. The more we give, the more we receive—not as a formula, but as a principle woven into the very nature of God. Jesus said that streams of living water will flow from those who have drunk deeply of Him. The fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—isn’t just for our own enjoyment. It’s the crop God wants to produce in our well-watered garden, so that others can taste and see His goodness through our lives.

The love I feel for you, or for anyone, is only a faint echo of God’s love for you. Again and again, I’m struck by how much God loves other people—and how He invites me to share in that love, to ask Him

for a portion of it to offer to others. When we're truly full—spiritually satisfied and energized by God's presence—gratitude, joy, and hope overflow. That overflow is meant to refresh the world around us.

Reflect on a time when you felt truly “full”—not just physically, but spiritually satisfied and energized. What did it feel like to overflow with gratitude, joy, or hope? God's vision is not just to fill us for our own sake, but so that we become channels of His living water to a thirsty world. Think about a moment when your encouragement, prayer, or faith became a source of refreshment for someone else. That is what you were made for.

Key Passage: Overflowing with Living Water

Jesus' invitation is never just about personal satisfaction. He promises that those who come to Him will not only be filled, but will become sources of living water for others. The Old Testament vision of well-watered gardens finds its fulfillment in the New Testament promise that the Spirit will overflow from within us, blessing everyone around us. This vision of overflow runs from Jesus' invitation at the Feast, through the flourishing life of the psalms, all the way to the river of life in the New Jerusalem. Each passage shows how God's blessing is meant to flow through us—now and forever.

As you read these passages, consider: Where is God inviting you to become a channel of His living water in the world?

Read John 7:37–44, Psalm 1:1–3, Revelation 22:1–5

On the last day of the feast, the greatest day, Jesus stood up and shouted out, “If anyone is thirsty, let him

come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. Just as the scripture says, ‘From within him will flow rivers of living water.’” (Now he said this about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were going to receive, for the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.) When they heard these words, some of the crowd began to say, “This really is the Prophet!” Others said, “This is the Christ!” But still others said, “No, for the Christ doesn’t come from Galilee, does he? Don’t the scriptures say that the Christ is a descendant of David and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David lived?” So there was a division in the crowd because of Jesus. Some of them were wanting to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him.

How blessed is the one who does not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand in the pathway with sinners, or sit in the assembly of scoffers! Instead he finds pleasure in obeying the LORD’s commands; he meditates on his commands day and night. He is like a tree planted by flowing streams; it yields its fruit at the proper time, and its leaves never fall off. He succeeds in everything he attempts.

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life—water as clear as crystal—pouring out from the

throne of God and of the Lamb, flowing down the middle of the city's main street. On each side of the river is the tree of life producing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month of the year. Its leaves are for the healing of the nations. And there will no longer be any curse, and the throne of God and the Lamb will be in the city. His servants will worship him, and they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. Night will be no more, and they will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, because the Lord God will shine on them, and they will reign forever and ever.

Reflection Questions

How have you experienced “overflow” in your spiritual life—times when God’s presence or provision spilled over to others?
(Share a story or memory.)

What holds you back from living as a “well-watered garden” that blesses others? What is one area of your life where you sense God wants to increase your overflow for others?
(Consider obstacles, fears, or habits.)

Who in your life is thirsty for encouragement, hope, or the love of Jesus?
(Identify specific people or groups.)

Action Step

What is one practical way you will allow God's living water to overflow to someone else this week? Who will you intentionally bless, encourage, or serve?

Prayer Focus

Father:

Thank You for filling me with Your love and grace. Forgive me for the times I've held back or lived as if Your blessings were just for me. Help me see the needs of others and respond with compassion and generosity.

Son:

Jesus, You are the source of living water. Forgive me for seeking satisfaction elsewhere. Let Your life overflow through me, bringing refreshment and hope to those around me.

Spirit:

Holy Spirit, empower me to be a channel of God's blessing. Expose anything that blocks Your flow in my life. Guide my words and actions so that others experience Your presence and love.

(Pause for prayer, and consider praying specifically for the people you hope to bless this week.)

For Further Study

Read the following related passages. Write out the scriptures to practicing hearing from God and respond with a few lines as well.

- Jeremiah 17:7–8
- Galatians 5:22–23
- 2 Corinthians 9:6–11

Conclusion

As we reach the end of this Living Waters journey, take a moment to look back and notice how far you've come. You began by naming your thirst and recognizing the deep longings that run through every human heart. Along the way, you've encountered the God who not only sees your need but delights to satisfy it—not with temporary fixes, but with Himself.

You've explored the wilderness with the Israelites, discovered Jesus as the Rock who gives living water, and learned to leave behind cracked cisterns for streams that never run dry. You've moved from obligation to invitation, from scarcity to abundance, from spiritual junk food to the Bread of Life. You've learned to recognize your unique pathway to Jesus, to walk with others, to break agreements with old lies, and to live as a well-watered garden—overflowing with life for the sake of others.

But this journey doesn't end here. The invitation of Jesus is ongoing:

“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the scripture says, ‘From within him will flow rivers of living water.’”

Living water is not just for you—it's meant to overflow. The world around you is full of people walking around spiritually

thirsty, searching for something real. As you continue to seek satisfaction in Jesus, you become a living signpost, pointing others to the Source. Your story, your prayers, your acts of love, your willingness to share both your struggles and your hope—these are the streams God uses to refresh the world.

A few final encouragements as you go:

- Keep returning to Jesus, your Living Water, every day.
- Stay honest about your thirst and your need.
- When you reach for a drink, tell Jesus what you're really thirsty for.
- Practice the rhythms you've learned: reflection, prayer, scripture, and community.
- Invite others to walk with you—there is always room at the table.
- When you stumble, remember that God is not holding out on you. His grace is deeper than your need.

May your life be a well-watered garden, flourishing and fruitful, drawing others to the One who satisfies every soul. May you taste and see that the Lord is good, and may His living water overflow from you to a thirsty world.

May your life be a well-watered garden, flourishing and fruitful, drawing others to the One who satisfies every soul. As all creation joins in praise (Psalm 148), may your story, your prayers, and your acts of love become streams that refresh a thirsty world.

Let's keep walking this journey—together, with Jesus, our Living Water.

If you would like to discuss the book feel free to reach out.
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Aaron Bauer".

Aaron Bauer
Issaquah, WA
July 2025
aaron@issaquah.cc

Appendix

This appendix is here to help you go a little deeper and keep growing with Jesus, even after you finish the main sessions. It kicks off with a big prayer that weaves together some of the key scriptures from the book—you can use it anytime, whether you’re praying solo or with a group. After that, you’ll find prayers for each chapter to help you revisit the main themes, plus a full list of all the scripture references we’ve used.

Feel free to come back to these prayers whenever you want to remind yourself of God’s promises, guide your journaling, or lead a prayer time with others. Whether you’re working through a particular session again, looking for a little fresh encouragement, or just wanting to draw closer to Jesus—your Living Water—this appendix is here for you. And if you’re journaling, using a notebook or notes app can really help you capture what the Spirit is saying as you go.

O LORD our God, As a deer longs for streams of water, so our souls long for You; we thirst for You, the living God. O God, You are our God! We long for You! Our souls thirst for You, our flesh yearns for

You, in this dry and parched land where there is no water. We spread out our hands to You in prayer; our souls thirst for You in this parched land.

You, O LORD, are our shepherd; we lack nothing. You lead us to lush pastures and refreshing waters. You restore our strength and guide us along right paths for Your name's sake. How precious is Your loyal love, O God! We find shelter under Your wings. We are filled with food from Your house, and You allow us to drink from the river of Your delights. For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light we see light.

I have tasted and seen that the LORD is good! How blessed are those who take refuge in Him! Though young lions grow weak and hungry, those who seek the LORD lack no good thing. You open Your hand and satisfy every living thing with the food they desire. You prepare a feast before us; You anoint our heads with oil; our cups overflow. Surely Your goodness and faithful love will pursue us all our days.

You are our Rock and our salvation, our fortress and deliverer. You brought streams out of the rock and made water flow down like rivers. You turned the rock into a pool of water, the flint into springs of water. You led Your people through the great and terrifying wilderness, bringing water out of the flinty rock. We did not thirst as You led us through the deserts; You made water flow for us from the rock; You split the rock and water gushed out.

Lord Jesus, You said, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as Scripture says, rivers of living water will flow from within him." You told the Samaritan woman, "If you had known the gift of God and who it is that says to you, 'Give me some water to drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water. Whoever drinks of the water I give will never

thirst again, but it will become a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

You are the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To those who thirst, You freely give water from the spring of the water of life. You lead us in the path of life; in Your presence there is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Forgive us, Lord, for forsaking You, the fountain of living water, and for digging broken cisterns that cannot hold water. Help us open our mouths wide, for You promise to fill them. Feed us with the finest wheat and satisfy us with honey from the rock.

You are our ever-present help in times of trouble. You satisfy those who thirst and fill those who hunger with good things. You supply all our needs according to Your glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

We remember, O God, that You are our Rock, the Most High God, our Redeemer. Our souls delight in You; we taste and see that You are good. May we always long for You, be satisfied in You, and find our joy in Your presence forever. Amen.

Prayers By Chapter

Chapter 1

O God, as the deer longs for streams of water, so my soul longs for You. I confess my thirst and hunger—my need for living water that only You can give. Thank You, Jesus, for inviting me to ask and receive. Satisfy my deepest longings and fill my hunger with Your presence, for You alone can truly satisfy (John 4:10; Psalm 107:9; Psalm 42:1–2).

Chapter 2

Father, when I am in the wilderness, remind me that You are my Rock and my refuge. Thank You for providing water from the rock, for being my protector and deliverer. Jesus, You are the spiritual Rock

that followed Your people, and You are with me today—my strength, my sustainer, my living water (Numbers 20:8; 1 Corinthians 10:4; Psalm 18:2).

Chapter 3

Lord, forgive me for forsaking You, the fountain of living water, and for digging cracked cisterns that cannot hold water. Thank You for making streams in the desert and rivers in the wasteland. Break open the rocks in my heart and let Your living water flow abundantly, filling every dry place (Jeremiah 2:13; Isaiah 43:19–20; Psalm 78:15–16).

Chapter 4

Jesus, thank You for inviting me to the feast, for offering the treasure and the pearl of great price. I come, thirsty and hungry, to receive the water of life freely. Help me to say “yes” to Your invitation with joy and gladness (Matthew 13:44–46; Revelation 22:16–17; Isaiah 55:1–3).

Chapter 5

Father, when I am tempted to doubt Your goodness, remind me of Your promises. You are my strong refuge and helper in times of trouble. I trust that You will supply all my needs according to Your glorious riches in Christ Jesus, and that You withhold no good thing from those who walk with integrity. Help me to rest in Your sufficiency and join all creation in praising You, for You are not holding out on me I trust that You will supply all my needs according to Your glorious riches in Christ Jesus (Genesis 3:1–6; Psalm 46:1; Psalm 84:11; Psalm 148; Philippians 4:19).

Chapter 6

Lord, You are one—worthy of all my love. Help me to love You with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength. Let my life be an offering, wholly devoted to You, and teach me to love my neighbor as myself (Deuteronomy 6:4–5; Mark 12:28–31; Psalm 63:1, 3–5).

Chapter 7

Creator God, thank You for forming me uniquely and calling me by name. Help me to listen for Your voice and follow You. Guide me to walk the path You have set before me, embracing the way You have designed me to meet with You (Psalm 139:13–16; John 10:27–28).

Chapter 8

Jesus, thank You for walking with me on the road, for opening my eyes to Your presence. Give me companions for the journey—friends who encourage, challenge, and support me. May we help each other up and walk together in faith and love (Luke 24:13–32; Ecclesiastes 4:9–12; Hebrews 10:23–25).

Chapter 9

Shepherd God, lead me beside still waters and restore my soul. Make me like a well-watered garden, continually refreshed by Your Spirit. Let my cup overflow with Your goodness and faithfulness, that I may flourish and bear fruit for Your glory (Isaiah 58:11; Psalm 23:1–6).

Chapter 10

Lord, You invite me to come, eat what is good, and delight in rich food. Jesus, You are the Bread of Life—help me to turn from empty substitutes and feed on You. Satisfy my soul with Your presence and fill me with lasting nourishment (Isaiah 55:1–3; John 6:35; Psalm 81:10, 16).

Chapter 11

Father, I submit to You and resist the enemy. Renew my mind with Your truth and transform me by the power of Your Spirit. By the blood of the Lamb and the word of my testimony, help me to overcome every lie and walk in the freedom Christ has won for me (James 4:7–8; Romans 12:1–2; Revelation 12:10–11).

Chapter 12

Jesus, You promised that whoever believes in You will have rivers of living water flowing from within. Make me a well-watered garden, a spring that never fails. Let Your Spirit overflow from my life, bringing refreshment and hope to all who are thirsty (John 7:37–38; Isaiah 58:11; Ezekiel 47:1–12).

Scriptural References

- Genesis 3:1–6
- Numbers 20:2–13
- Deuteronomy 6:4–9
- Psalm 1:1–3
- Psalm 23:1–3, 5–6
- Psalm 34:8–10
- Psalm 41:1–2
- Psalm 42:1–2
- Psalm 46:1
- Psalm 63:1
- Psalm 78:15–16, 20
- Psalm 84:11
- Psalm 139:13–16
- Psalm 148

- Ecclesiastes 4:9–12
- Isaiah 41:17–18
- Isaiah 43:19–20
- Isaiah 55:1–3, 6–13
- Isaiah 58:5–11
- Isaiah 66:12–13
- Jeremiah 2:13, 2:31
- Jeremiah 17:7–8
- Jeremiah 31:12
- Matthew 5:6
- Matthew 6:25–34
- Matthew 13:44–46
- Matthew 14:13–21
- Matthew 22:34–40
- Matthew 25:34–40
- Mark 12:28–31
- Luke 14:15–24
- Luke 24:13–32
- John 4:4–15

- John 6:35
- John 7:37–39
- John 10:27–28
- 1 Corinthians 10:1–4
- 1 Corinthians 12:12–27
- 2 Corinthians 3:17–18
- Ephesians 4:13–16
- Philippians 4:19
- Galatians 5:22–23
- Romans 8:31–32
- Romans 12:1–2
- James 1:16–18
- James 4:7–8
- Hebrews 10:24–25
- Revelation 12:10–11
- Revelation 22:1–5, 16–17

Endnotes

John Eldredge, Wild at Heart: Discovering the Secret of a Man's Soul.

Cited in discussions of spiritual adventure, desire, and the masculine journey.

John Eldredge, Waking the Dead: The Glory of a Heart Fully Alive. Referenced in sessions exploring wholeheartedness and the restoration of the heart.

John Eldredge, Beautiful Outlaw: Experiencing the Playful, Disruptive, Extravagant Personality of Jesus.

Quoted in the context of moving from duty to delight in following Jesus and the invitation to joy.

Stasi Eldredge, Free to Live: The Utter Relief of Holiness. Referenced in the chapter on breaking false agreements and spiritual freedom.

John Bevere, The Bait of Satan. Cited in the discussion of offense, bitterness, and spiritual traps that hinder freedom and growth.

Brother Lawrence, Practicing the Presence of God. Referenced in the chapter on wholehearted love and integrating faith into all of life's moments.

C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*.

Referenced in the introduction regarding desire and the human longing for satisfaction.

C.S. Lewis, *The Inner Ring*.

Referenced in chapter 4 regarding the experience of being overlooked and desire to be included.

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