

# LIFE STUDIES

Promise for Life



A SMALL GROUP CURRICULUM MADE BY PBC

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# **L.I.F.E STARTER JOURNALING**

*The Bible journaling method called LIFE Starter was developed to create an easy, yet effective way for people to study the Bible, remember what they read and allow their hearts to get ignited for Jesus Christ.*

L.I.F.E. stands for Listen, Investigate, Focus and Engage

## **L=LISTEN**

In your journal, write the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, listen to the Holy Spirit and focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal. Writing helps you remember the verses

## **I = INVESTIGATE**

*Next, you investigate the context around the Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).*

## **F = FOCUS**

The next step is focusing on the text to make it applicable for your own life. What does the text mean today? What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read? Write out a couple sentences detailing what God is saying to you through the text.

## **E = ENGAGE**

The final step in the journaling process is engaging God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

***The beautiful thing about this journaling method is that it is short and only takes a few minutes, and it can be done every time you read or study a passage.***

# SESSION 1: INTRODUCTION

## **Welcome and Program Overview: 5 minutes**

PBC LIFE Studies are meant to be highly interactive, so that the information presented is learned and lived. The last thing we need is more head knowledge, so there will be a lot of small group interaction as you learn and live out the materials we cover each week. There will be weeks where there is little teaching and more interaction and there will be weeks where there is more teaching. We will start this week with a self assessment that you and your spouse talk about during the class and during the week for homework. Each class will come with some homework for each couple that is imperative to complete. If you do the work together, you will grow together and get the most out of this program. In the next few weeks, we will cover a lot of Biblical Truth to build a strong foundation and then move into more practical application, culminating in you creating a **"Family Covenant"** to take your family to new heights of relationship with Jesus. **This will allow you to fortify your family to stand strong against the changing culture that wants to eliminate God's Truth, and will create an authentic faith in Jesus Christ!**

## **Session #1 Teaching: Why are we doing this study? 10 minutes**

A Christian home, in uncomplicated terms, is one in which God is alive and present in the lives of family members. There needs to be passion present. It is Christian not just in name, but in covenant—Christ is present through His Spirit in the lives of His followers who live there. A physical house built without a foundation is destined to fall. Only a firm foundation creates a real and lasting home. In the same way, Christ, in His fullness, is the foundation of a Christian home. If we try to create a Christian home only by JUST immersing in a Christian Church culture, we will "labor in vain." We even run the risk of building on a sandy foundation that could leave our house, our family, in danger in a storm of life that our current and future culture is bringing. When we let the life of God flow through us and into our family through our intentional, purposeful, life-giving relationship with Jesus, that is how "the Lord builds the house."

Your passion for each other was culminated with your marriage covenant. We want to use your marriage to help you understand what God means by covenant. This should help you grow your intimacy with God and each other. John 17:3 explains that, "And this is eternal life: [it means] to know (to perceive, recognize, become acquainted with, and understand) You, the only true and real God, and [likewise] to know Him, Jesus [as the] Christ (the Anointed One, the Messiah), Whom You have sent."

The word **"KNOW"** is a verb that means "to come to KNOW, learn, and realize, through personal experience." In Luke 1:34, Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not **know** a man?" This "knowing" describes intimacy. Few people realize that the Old Covenant was essentially a marriage covenant—by which God "was a husband" to Israel (**Jeremiah 31:32**). In this covenant, Israel, the wife, had agreed to submit to God and obey His laws. But she did not. Israel's adultery with foreign gods was so heinous that God divorced His people except for a few who still tried to serve Him (**Jeremiah 3:8-14; Isaiah 50:1**). The people never had the right heart and mind to obey (**Deuteronomy 5:29; Romans 8:7**). This fault of the people, the book of Hebrews explains, was the problem with the Old Covenant—and the reason a New Covenant was necessary (**Hebrews 8:7-8**). The book of Hebrews actually quotes this important passage from Jeremiah twice (**Hebrews 8:8-13; Hebrews 10:16-17**).

**Just like we will learn in future sessions, YOUR identity in Christ and His New Covenant can build a Christian home that starts with your heart; with your passion, and with PURPOSE, ON PURPOSE. In this first session, we are going to spend the next 30-minutes doing a self-assessment. We will come back and wrap up with a 2-minute take-away from each couple and talk about the homework and next class. Mute yourself and break out into couple groups to answer the following questions.**

**Self Assessment (Spouses): 30 minutes**

Let's start with where you are right NOW. We already know that the best guidebook for running your life is the Bible. Are YOU actually using it to run your home? Here are some topics to pray about and consider brining (or expanding upon) at your house. Rate yourself as a couple from 1-10 (10 being the best) and total you (honest) current score to share with the group at the next class:

**1.** Look forward and stop going back to comfortable. We can so quickly act like the Israelites as Moses led them out of Egypt and hijack our trip to the "Promised Land!" The challenge is to press forward and allow God to grow you and not go back to the things of life (even if they're not that bad) that keep you stuck in mediocrity. Your family needs more than that. Your family needs a Promised Land and you can make sure that you don't spend your existence wandering in the desert. Remember, that the temptation to 'go back to Egypt' is a lie -- there is no peace, no happiness, no freedom, in returning to old ways. Press on in faith and don't return to Egypt. What is your "Egypt" that holds you back?

**Rate/Discuss as a couple:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**2.** Become stronger leaders. Pray for the ability to think and act more like Jesus so you can grow into a stronger leader. Confess your mistakes and repent when you fall short; create clear vision and values for you and your family; hold yourself and your family lovingly accountable to your family values.

**Rate/Discuss as a couple:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**3.** Build solid character. Never tell "white lies." Tell the truth even when it's not easy, or convenient. Follow through on your commitments even if they become more costly, inconvenient, or time-consuming than you'd estimated. Always put forth the extra effort necessary to do an excellent job. Don't give others false impressions, such as by omitting facts that reveal reality or offering excuses to disguise reality. Let go of grudges against people who hurt or offend you; forgive and reconcile right away.

**Rate/Discuss as a couple:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**4.** Develop stronger people skills. Genuinely care about people. Value using your heart and not always your head. Learn how to confront and not stuff. Learn how to be efficient with things but effective with people. Listen more than you speak. Ask the right questions to engage others in good conversations. Don't keep score with people; serve them to express your love for God rather than because you're expecting something in return. Don't judge people or try to debate them into Christianity. Instead, love them and humbly tell them how your own relationship with Jesus has changed your life for the better. Control your attitudes and emotions to make them positive rather than negative. Look for ways to meet others' needs. Speak respectfully to people and well of them. .

**Rate/Discuss as a couple:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Maximize your time. Get rid of busyness. Identify your priorities and base your schedule on them. Don't let trivial tasks consume too much of your attention; focus on what's most important. Whenever you need to add something to your "to-do" list, take something off the list to make room for the new task. Trust God in every part of your life and tell Him that you want to use your time to fulfill His purposes for you. He will guide you to use your time well. Don't waste your time comparing yourself to others who have different talents. Instead, develop and use the unique talents that God has given you.

**Rate/Discuss as a couple:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Overcome pride. Pride is a particularly dangerous sin because it not only separates you from God, it causes you to attack God by attempting to dethrone Him in your life and enthroning yourself as your own god. Ask God to help you cultivate humility, which will bring you both peace and success. Recognize that you're a sinner just all other people and are not superior to anyone else. Don't always insist on having your own way. Seek out and be open to Biblical instruction, reproof, rebuke, and constructive criticism. Submit to authority. Learn from others and accept help from them whenever you need it.

**Rate/Discuss as a couple:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Model honor for your family. The word honor means to highly value something – to appreciate, cherish and recognize it as a priceless treasure. Matthew 6:21 says, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." This verse suggests that honor is primarily a matter of the heart. So in marriage and family, it involves recognizing the beauty and worth of your relationship with your spouse and children and then doing something to put that recognition and appreciation into action. It's about dedication, heart and soul, to building strong foundational qualities into your family dynamic.

**Rate/Discuss as a couple:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Create work-life balance. Build mental balance into your life by learning new information and developing new skills. Build emotional balance by constantly investing in your relationships. Build physical balance by getting enough sleep and exercise regularly and eating a healthy diet. Build spiritual balance by celebrating disciplines like prayer, Bible study, scripture meditation, and participating in church worship services. Build structure for all quadrants of life and make sure you are addressing them all with the same amount of passion (for Jesus).

**Rate/Discuss as a couple:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. Manage your money well. Remember that all the money you and your company have comes from God. Give generously as God leads you. Avoid unnecessary debt and pay existing debt off as soon as possible. Don't concern yourself with the prosperity of dishonest people; keep doing what's right yourself and trust God to judge everyone fairly. Communicate more clearly about money, so there is no relational unrest.

**Rate/Discuss as a couple:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. Start with WHY! Why Jesus? What's blocking you from finding your passion - and integrating it into a balanced work/life dynamic? What's your reason for not living in your passion? And what are you going to do to change? Create a practical plan to address the questions and topics above. If you don't integrate your passion into a balanced life, you will never achieve fulfillment. God gave you passion and He wants you to point that same passion back to Him. He points His at you, so what will it take to have the same passion back?

**Rate/Discuss as a couple:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Total Score:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Small Group Discussion: 15 minutes**

- After reviewing the video discuss what do you hope to get from this class as a group?
- Are there any questions about the structure and goals of this class?
- Discuss your assessment and improvement goals.

**Homework:**

- Discuss the class and the assessment and reevaluate what you'd like to get out of this class.

# SESSION #1

## WK. 1 DEVO 1

### **Read John 17**

Journal about growing in your intimacy with God and each other during this study.

**L=Listen** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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**I = Investigate** the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

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**F=Focus** to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

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**E = Engage** God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

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# SESSION #1

## WK. 1 DEVO 2

### **Read Jeremiah 31:30-40**

Review and journal about how the Old Covenant was essentially a marriage covenant—by which God “was a husband” to Israel.

**L=Listen** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you’re studying. After you’ve read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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# SESSION #1

## WK. 1 DEVO 3

### **Read Romans 8:1-17**

*Journal about New Life Through the Spirit.*

**L=Listen** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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# SESSION #1

## WK. 1 DEVO 4

### **Read Hebrews 8:8-13**

*Journal about why the New Covenant was necessary.*

**L=Listen** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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# SESSION 2:

## COVENANT WITH GOD

**Welcome, Prayer & Review of LIFE Starter Journaling: 5 minutes**

**Session #2 Teaching:**

Why do I need understand covenant for my marriage? 10 minutes

Many have heard of the Old Covenant, but few have understood that it was in many ways similar to our marriage covenant. Even more surprising to many, it was a covenant between Israel and the God of the Old Testament, who later came to earth as Jesus Christ! Seeing the big picture of our covenant relationship with God the Father, Jesus and our spouse is critical in fully grasping our identity in Christ. If we understand how the covenants function in the Bible, we will have a good grasp of how the Bible fits together.

**Covenant can be defined as follows:** a covenant is a chosen relationship in which two parties make binding promises to each other. A covenant should be distinguished from a contract because it is a personal relationship which people voluntarily enter. The definition of covenant here is rather broad, but that is because there are many different kinds of covenants in Scripture. Marriage is the best current illustration of a covenant, for a man and woman choose to enter into a relationship with one another and make promises to one another. Not all covenants were alike in the ancient world. In some covenants a person with more authority made a covenant with those having less authority and power. Such was the case when a king made a relationship with his subjects. God's covenant with Abraham plays a central role in the biblical storyline. God promised Abraham offspring, land, and universal blessing. The promise to Abraham finds its culmination in Jesus Christ as the true son of Abraham (Gal. 3:16). All those who belong to Jesus Christ by faith are children of Abraham. The promise of land was fulfilled when Israel possessed Canaan under the leadership of Joshua and Solomon, yet Israel lost the land and went into exile because of sin. Remember that a covenant is a formal, binding agreement, in which each party agrees to specific terms or expectations. To put it briefly, God required Israel to obey whatever He said. In exchange, God would make Israel the premier nation of the earth. Exodus chapters 20–23 give the fundamental terms of the covenant. The laws contained in the 10 Commandments were in effect long before God entered into this covenant with Israel. They were included in (or became one of the requirements of) the Old Covenant, and they continued on into the New Covenant also. Exodus 20–23 is called "the book of the covenant" (Exodus 24:4, 7). After hearing these basic terms spelled out, it was Israel's turn to express agreement. "All the words which the Lord has said we will do," was their reply (Exodus 24:3, 7). Of course, the blood of animals prefigured the blood Jesus Christ would one day shed, and which would become the blood of the New Covenant. The new covenant is the climax of all of God's covenants. We will talk more about the new covenant in the next session, but in essence, it represents the culmination of God's saving work among his people. God regenerates his people by his Spirit and renews their hearts so that they obey him. The basis for such renewal is the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, for by his atoning death and resurrection complete forgiveness of sins is achieved. Hence, a new and bold access to God that wasn't available in the old covenant is obtained. The covenant with Israel has passed away, and now the promise is fulfilled in the restored Israel, which consists of both Jews and Gentiles. All the promises made to Abraham and David are fulfilled in the new covenant.

**Small Group Discussion: 25 minutes**

- Discuss why a covenant with God is so important.
- Discuss how God's covenant is a precursor for your marriage covenant.
- Do you understand the different between the "old covenant" and the "new covenant?" Discuss.

Pray with your group about the importance of understanding the magnitude of God's covenant marriage.

**Small Group Wrap-Up: 15 minutes**

What were the biggest take-aways and action items? Group Discussion: 15 minutes

# SESSION #2

## WK. 2 DEVO 1

### **Read Genesis 2**

Focus on Genesis 2:24 and journal about what God says about becoming ONE flesh.

**L=Listen** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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**I = Investigate** the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

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**F=Focus** to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

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**E = Engage** God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

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# SESSION #2

## WK. 2 DEVO 2

### **Read Ecclesiastes 4**

Focus on Ecclesiastes 4:12 and journal about what God says about the unity of marriage.

**L=Listen** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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# SESSION #2

## WK. 2 DEVO 3

### **Re-Read Ephesians 5:25-33**

Think about how you can do YOUR part to treat your spouse like God expects. Journal about that.

**L=Listen** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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# SESSION #2

## WK. 2 DEVO 4

### **Read 1 Corinthians 13**

Pray about the fruits of the Spirit and areas that YOU need to improve to show God's love to your spouse.

**L=Listen** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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# **SESSION 3:**

## **COVENANT WITH GOD**

**Welcome, Prayer & Review of LIFE Starter Journaling: 5 minutes**

**Session #3 Teaching: What is the New Covenant?: 10 minutes**

The “NEW” covenant is a marriage proposal from Jesus Christ! We see this reflected in Christ’s words and actions on the evening before His death. During the last Passover meal He shared with His disciples, Jesus introduced the symbols of broken bread to represent the sacrifice of His broken body and wine to symbolize His shed blood—His death in Matthew 26:27-28. “Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.’” Jesus was explaining that the shedding of His blood as a sacrifice for sin was required to make the New Covenant possible. Without it, there was no way to atone for the sins of all who would participate in the covenant. Part of the understanding of the “Why?” of this mystery can be found in the understanding of word “covenant,” which is the vehicle by which a man and a woman are to establish the lifelong, faithful relationship in which physical sexual interaction is meant to operate. Covenant is also the fundamental tool that God has designed to construct and order His relationship with man. Covenants are established by making an oath—an oath that creates kinship between the two who are making the covenant.

Christ strikes a covenant with us at our salvation—one that is stronger than blood, one that establishes a divine, everlasting kinship bond. In making covenant with Him, God adopts us into His family and treats us as heirs to the family fortune. If you don’t have an oath, you don’t have a covenant. Another Hebrew word for oath is “I raise my hand” (See Deuteronomy 32:40). Like a witness on a witness stand, we raise our hand and confirm that what we are saying is true. Think about this as you raise your hands in worship. In having made our eternal covenant with God through Christ, we have united ourselves with Him and become one flesh. And because His name is now attached to our lives, it cannot be detached. We are now extensions of Him and eternally connected to Him. Just as your children will carry on your name and legacy, so we carry on His name and legacy. The power of Almighty God is not being released in many of our lives because we have never embraced this high calling. We have married Christ in word but have never consummated the marriage by giving ourselves to Him with the trust and abandon that we were designed to give. Rather than giving our all to Him, rather than submitting to the source of our life with joyful obedience, many times, we have grumbled and complained and questioned Him at every turn in the road. Many times, we reject the call to love, which is a call to sacrificially give ourselves to Him just as He has sacrificially given Himself to us.

So how does this covenant reflect our marriage covenant? We need to make that same sacrifice for our spouses and that is why our understanding of covenant is so important. We may no longer be subject to sacrificing animals for God (because He made the ultimate sacrifice on the Cross), but we need to take a hard look at our life, marriage and family and recognize where (and when) we are not honoring our “covenant” commitment!

### **Small Group Discussion: 25 minutes**

- Discuss your understanding of the NEW covenant. Why is this covenant with God is so important.
- Discuss how God’s covenant is a precursor for your marriage covenant.
- Do you understand the different between the “old covenant” and the “new covenant?” Discuss.

Pray with your group about the importance of understanding the magnitude of God’s covenant marriage.

### **Small Group Wrap-Up: 15 minutes**

What were the biggest take-aways and action items? Group Discussion: 15 minutes

Welcome & Opening Prayer: 10 minutes

# SESSION #3

## WK. 3 DEVO 1

### **Read Philippians 2:1-8**

*Resolving conflict requires defeating selfishness.*

**L=Listen** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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# SESSION #3

## WK. 3 DEVO 2

### **Read Romans 12:9-21**

*Resolving conflict requires pursuing the other person.*

**L=Listen** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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# SESSION #3

## WK. 3 DEVO 3

### **Read Ephesians 4**

*Resolving conflict requires forgiveness.*

**L=Listen** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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# SESSION #3

## WK. 3 DEVO 4

### **Read 1 Peter 3:8-22**

*Resolving conflict requires returning a blessing for an insult.*

**L=Listen** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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# SESSION 4: COVENANT RELATIONSHIP & IDENTITY IN CHRIST

**Welcome, Prayer & Review of LIFE Starter Journaling: 5 minutes**

**Session #4 Teaching: Covenant & Identity in Christ: 10 minutes**

**Ephesians 2:8-9** reminds us that we are saved by grace through faith. **2 Corinthians 5:20** teaches that we are new creations in Christ – the old has gone, the new has come. Jesus taught his disciples to begin their prayers with the words, “Our Father.” **John 1:12** tells us that all who received Christ, even those who believed in his name are given the right to be children of God. Through faith in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven for our sins, given the promise of eternal life, and brought into God’s family. We become brothers and sisters. We gain a new identity. The key word for Covenant is “relationship,” and we are brought into a Covenant relationship with God through Jesus. When Jesus established the Lord’s Supper in **1 Corinthians 11:25**, he told his disciples, “This cup is the new covenant which is sealed in my blood for the forgiveness of sins...”. This is our **New Covenant Identity**. This is the identity that Jesus gave his own blood to purchase for you. Your identity is the way you perceive yourself, the way you see yourself, what you consider yourself to be. Your identity answers the question: Who are you? And in Christ you have a whole new way to answer that question! We are baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Being baptized into the name of the Father gives us a new family name, and a new identity. (see Ephesians 1:3-5). We are adopted into God’s family (a royal family), filled with God’s Spirit, and given all associated family privileges: salvation, forgiveness through Christ, the promise of eternal life, membership in the Church (the Body of Christ), spiritual gifts, and privileged access to the Father. These are the greatest possible gifts and are to be gratefully received. And our identity in Christ is greater than all others. God leads us to make other sources of identity subject to him. Sometimes this is painful. We gain a sense of identity, overtly and subtly, from career, abilities, heritage, marital status, accomplishments, family legacy, race, gender, sexuality, social groups, economic position, nationality, etc. Releasing our sense of identity from these things can be very difficult. But all of that really is nothing in comparison to the new identity we find in Christ. (see Philippians 3:1-12). The tasks related to our identity are to cultivate a relationship with God and hear what God is saying by the Holy Spirit, especially as God speaks through prayer, scripture, and circumstances.

This has two impacts on our marriages:

1. Understanding who we are in Christ is important for ALL our relationships, but especially our marriage. It is significant to note that when obedience does not flow from our sense of identity in Christ, we tend to miss the point and dishonor the name of Jesus Christ. If we allow God to direct us, we will be far more effective in our service to our family and the world. The first step is to allow obedience to flow from the Covenant Identity that God gives us. Much is at stake here in terms of our witness for Jesus Christ. Remember, your identity is important because: *How you live flows out of who you are. How you speak to your husband, or your wife, flows out of knowing who you are. How you treat others, flows out of how you see yourself. Even how you spend your time flows out of who you think you are. How you relate to God flows out of knowing who you are in his sight, knowing how he sees you, and how you see yourself before Him.*
2. Like the new family we join and the new person we become in our new covenant through Christ, we begin a new covenant family when we get married. We forsake our other earthly identities and this covenant relationship, second to the Lord, becomes primary in our lives.

## **Small Group Discussion: 25 minutes**

- How hard is it to accept what God has done for us?
- Can you think of helpful analogies for the Covenant relationships? (For example, education or adoption.)
- Apart from Christ, where do you gain your sense of identity? Why is it so hard to allow our identity to Christ to trump all other sources of identity? What does finding our primary identity in Christ mean for the other sources of identity, work and family, for instance?

***Small Group Wrap-Up: 15 minutes***

What were the biggest take-aways and action items? Group Discussion: 15 minutes

***Homework: 5 minutes***

•Discuss together how do the following passages in the gospels help you understand the idea of being in a covenant relationships with God (See John 1:12, John 3:1-17, Matthew 6:25-34, Luke 15:11-31).

# SESSION #4

## WK. 4 DEVO 1

### **Read Ezekiel 11:14-25**

*Journal about "restoration" and radical change needed in your life.*

**L=Listen** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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# SESSION #4

## WK. 4 DEVO 2

### Read **2 Corinthians 5:11-21**

*God has made you a NEW creation, so accept that fact and start acting like one.*

**L=Listen** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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# SESSION #4

## WK. 4 DEVO 3

### **Read Romans 8:1-9**

*We need the Holy Spirit to overcome our flesh and to live with the gifts that God wants us to experience.*

**L=Listen** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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# SESSION #4

## WK. 4 DEVO 4

### **Read 1 Peter 4:1-11**

*Are YOU living for God? What changes do you need to make to fully live for God?*

**L=Listen** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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# SESSION 5:

## IDENTITY IN CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

**Welcome, Prayer & Review of LIFE Starter Journaling: 5 minutes**  
**Session #5 Teaching: Identity & The Holy Spirit: 10 minutes**

I hope you have a better understanding of your full identity in Christ and how the acceptance of that identity can also make your marriage more fulfilling. Our identity in Christ comes with a “Helper!” John 16:7 explains, “But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.”

**The Holy Spirit’s works through the New Covenant!** The Holy Spirit is Christ’s gift to the church (see John. 14-16), and the distinctive mark of the New Covenant, as explained in Ezekiel 36:27, “And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.” According to Jesus, in John 14:12 (John 14:12, “Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.”), the gift of the Spirit makes possible a life of greater spiritual vitality than was available to Old Covenant believers, including the disciples when they were in the physical presence of Christ (see John 16:7). In general, the Father initiates and oversees his plan of redemption, the Son accomplishes it, and the Holy Spirit applies the benefits of Christ’s redemptive work to believers (as explained in Ephesians 1:14; 2 Corinthians 5:5). That is, the Holy Spirit provides the present tangible evidence of the believers’ future full salvation when they are glorified. The Holy Spirit personally communicates the presence of Christ to believers and through them to the church and the world.

So, you may be thinking, “What does the Holy Spirit and my identity in Christ have to do with my marriage?” The Holy Spirit **is the seal** of your marriage covenant, the **ever available** source of love and strength to constantly renew your bond. The Holy Spirit gives couples the help needed to live out the sacrament of matrimony. Without His grace and His help, we cannot be Christ to our spouse. We are fallen, self-centered, and broken people. We need God’s grace to experience the fruits of the Spirit in our marriages and families. Without grace, we fail to be the persons God has called us to be. Galatians 5:22-23 reminds us, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” When YOU review this list, are YOU living these “fruits” out each day in your marriage? If there are times when you feel that you cannot demonstrate these fruits to your family, STOP and PRAY for the Holy Spirit to give you the help and grace to react as Christ in the situation. Jesus tells us “Ask, and it will be given you” (Matthew 7:7). When you are not your best, ask for an out-pouring of the Holy Spirit to give you the help and grace to be more Christ-like in your words and actions. He is an ever available source of help. We are to be channels of the Holy Spirit, allowing the gifts of the Holy Spirit to flow out to others. Pray for the Holy Spirit to be more present in your marriage and look for signs of the Holy Spirit’s work in your lives. He is the ever-available source of love and strength for your marriage.

Be honest, if left up to you to try and create those fruits of the Spirit on your own, how far do you think you’ll get?! If you’re like me, not far. I NEED God’s help and He gives it through the Holy Spirit. You can, because He will!

Marriage is the way for us, as Christians, to live out God’s covenant for ALL to see—for better or for worse, for the whole of life. Allow your identity in Christ and your Helper (The Holy Spirit) to give you the grace and strength to keep YOUR PROMISE and live out your vows.

***Small Group Discussion: 25 minutes***

- What did you find out about your Identity in Christ? How does that apply to your marriage?
- Re-read Galatians 5:22-23. When YOU review this list, are YOU living these “fruits” out each day in your marriage? Discuss together how you can improve.

***Small Group Wrap-Up: 15 minutes***

What were the biggest take-aways and action items? Group Discussion: 15 minutes

***Homework: 5 minutes***

- Discuss Galatians 5:22-23 together again and talk more about living these “fruits” out each day in your marriage. Discuss together how you can improve.

# SESSION #5

## WK. 5 DEVO 1

### **Read Matthew 6:19-34**

*God is the provider. Try to engulf Matthew 6:31 in your regiment of money management.*

**L=Listen** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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# SESSION #5

## WK. 5 DEVO 2

### **Read Luke 6:37-49**

*As a Christian, it's important to remember that God provides you with the strength to work each day therefore, it's only right to give back to the church and to charities that have the intent to better the world.*

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# SESSION #5

## WK. 5 DEVO 3

### **Read Proverbs 21**

Christians should be able to see the bigger picture and identify what saving a little money each month can equate to.

**L=Listen** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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# SESSION #5

## WK. 5 DEVO 4

### **Read Proverbs 24**

*Finally, money management is essential in Christian homes – especially the Biblical aspect that's associated with budgeting. It's important to remember God's wisdom in everything we do – especially finances!*

**L=Listen** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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# **SESSION 6:**

## **WALK (OR RUN) AWAY FROM EGYPT**

**Welcome, Prayer & Review of LIFE Starter Journaling: 5 minutes**  
**Session #6 Teaching: Out of Your OWN Egypt 10 minutes**

God chose Moses to lead his people out of Egyptian bondage and he patiently worked His plan through Moses' birth and adoption into Pharaoh's own household. **God has the same plan for YOU.** The Israelites found comfort in their slavery and even though it was NOT easy, it was all that they knew. The same concept works for us today. Sometimes we are steeped in sinful behavior and need to choose to "run" the other way, but we also get consumed with good things of this world as well! We get so comfortable in our worldly routine's that we sometime forget there is a better way. God's way!

Our "Egypt" can be bad things **or even good things.** Things that make us busy and take us away from God's purpose for our life. At the end of the day, we all need to believe that God has a bigger calling on our life and often, we need to be willing to get out of our comfort to step into our very OWN **promised land.**

**Deuteronomy 17: 16-17** is a great reminder, as it says, "The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the Lord has told you, "You are not to go back that way again." He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold." So, instead of accumulating worldly possessions and focusing on and identity that this world will bring, it's time to focus more on God and your identity as his chosen children and actually believe that He has a PROMISED LAND for YOU...  
**Personally!**

Today, in our break out groups, we are going to look back at YOUR LIFE AND MARRIAGE and discuss what might be holding YOU back from your very own PROMISED LAND.

**Yes, What is YOUR "Egypt?"**

It's time to trust God, so stop running. Stop trying. Stop pushing. Start resting and trusting in Him...Your Egypt is not too hard for God!

Go back to the questions you answered in Session #1 and discuss them again in light of what you have learned so far in this Life Study. Be willing to make some changes to walk away from the "Egypt" that may be holding your family back.

### **Small Group Discussion: 25 minutes**

- Look back at *YOUR LIFE* and discuss what might be holding *YOU* back from your very own *PROMISED LAND*. What is *YOUR "Egypt?"*
- Read Proverbs 3:5-7. Do you trust God to do the job? Do you think God knows about your concerns? Discuss the passage and what it means to trust God in your marriage. Give examples of specific areas that *YOU* need to submit to God.

*Pray together for God to help you identify and remove the "EGYPT" in YOUR life. Each couple should take the time to NAME THEIR EGYPT in prayer and command it to be gone in the name of Jesus. Pray for God's protection this week as the enemy will want to make "EGYPT" look so inviting. Hold each other up in prayer ALL week!*

### **Small Group Wrap-Up: 15 minutes**

What were the biggest take-aways and action items? Group Discussion: 15 minutes

### **Homework: 5 minutes**

- Read Mark 10:17-27 As you read the story of the RICH and the KINGDOM of GOD, PLEASE don't be like the rich man! If you can relate, make the needed changes TODAY! Finish this week's homework by returning to the assessment you did (see separate PDF) in Session #1. Say a prayer together and then create a

# SESSION #6

## WK. 6 DEVO 1

### **Read Ephesians 5:23-33**

Journal about what YOU can do differently to fulfill your BIBLICAL role as a spouse.

**L=Listen** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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# SESSION #6

## WK. 6 DEVO 2

### **Read 1 Corinthians 13**

Are YOU living a life defined by LOVE?

**L=Listen** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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# SESSION #6

## WK. 6 DEVO 3

### **Read Colossians 3**

Is YOUR marriage a representation of someone who is "Living as Those Made Alive in Christ?"

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# SESSION #6

WK. 6 DEVO 4

## **Read Ephesians 6**

*As we step into the next week and the parenting session, journal about training up children for Jesus!*

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# SESSION 7:

## IT'S TIME TO TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE!

**Welcome, Prayer & Review of LIFE Starter Journaling: 15 minutes**

Discuss how did you score on the busy assessment.

**Session #7 Teaching: Take YOUR Life Back!: 10 minutes**

Busyness is of the enemy and he wants to rob you of peace and make you think it's OK to love a life of stress. That stress doesn't end with YOU either, for it gets translated into every relationship you have. God cares more about your relationships than He does about your tasks and your ability to **"multi task!"**

**Do you take pride in your busyness and your ability to multitask?** The reality is that NO ONE does it well! God didn't build us to multitask. Research shows that multitasking is actually counterproductive! In fact busyness blinds us and dictates our schedule, so we don't slow down enough to think about each task. Each person.

Oftentimes, being busy multitasking fills a need to accomplish tasks in order to feel worthy. We seem to have an insatiable desire to always be one step ahead of where we are. It could be a coping mechanism to keep ourselves from thinking or feeling things we don't want to acknowledge, or an attempt to live up to the expectations of others.

Today, we are going to give you more time to engage as a group to talk about if you identify yourself as someone who's constantly "busy?" We want you to ask yourself, **"In all of your busyness, are you living the life that God wants you to live?" Does your busyness fulfill you, or are you trying to live up to the goals and expectations of what others want for you?**

The bottom line is that how you spend your time is a reflection of your **priorities**. God has already defined what should be the most important thing in your life, so now is the time to make time for God and the loving relationships that He has given you to cherish! Don't think Jesus can't sympathize with your busyness.

**Make some practical and measurable commitments to one another about "breaking the busy cycle!"** If you REALLY want to grow in your relationship with God and with your spouse, YOU NEED TO MAKE TIME to do so. You will benefit. Your spouse will benefit. Your children will benefit for generations to come. The ripple effect of YOUR DECISION to break the busy cycle will reach far beyond your wildest dreams. When God enacted the old covenant with His people, He prescribed an entire day, the Sabbath day, to be sure they made time just to focus on Him. No work or distractions. Just worship. Your marriage covenant, and its needs for time, are the same.

**I'll end today with the Bible story of Martha and Mary in Luke 10:38-42**, "As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

**Who do YOU relate to?**

### **Small Group Discussion: 25 minutes**

- Do you take pride in your busyness and your ability to multitask? Discuss.
- Do you identify yourself as someone who's constantly busy?
- In all of your busyness, are you living the life that God wants you to live?
- Does your busyness fulfill you, or are you trying to live up to the goals and expectations of what others want for you?

*Pray together for God to help you focus on getting "un-busy" as a family to find peace and a focus on each other and God.*

### **Small Group Wrap-Up: 15 minutes**

What were the biggest take-aways and action items? Group Discussion: 15 minutes

### **Homework: 5 minutes**

Read the info below on **Sabbath rest** and discuss as a couple:

#### ***We are designed to rest.***

So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. - **Genesis 1:27**

Since we are created in God's image, we are to obey limits in our work. Did God rest because he was exhausted, or did he rest to offer us image-bearers a model cycle of work and rest? The fourth of the Ten Commandments tells us that God's rest is meant as an example for us to follow.

God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation. - **Genesis 2:3**

#### ***What are we to learn from this?***

***How will you celebrate the Sabbath this week?***

# SESSION #7

## WK. 7 DEVO 1

### **Read 1 John 4:7-21**

*God's love came first and it is a truly sacrificial love. Journal about how YOU show your family love.*

**L=Listen** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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# SESSION #7

## WK. 7 DEVO 2

### ***Read Philippians 1:3-11***

*Are YOU living a life defined by LOVE?*

**L=Listen** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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# SESSION #7

## WK. 7 DEVO 3

### **Read Proverbs 14**

*Are you raising kids to be wise or foolish?*

**L=Listen** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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# SESSION #7

## WK. 7 DEVO 4

### **Read Matthew 6:5-14**

*Parents need to be willing to model forgiveness and grace to their children, regardless of the personal cost.*

**L=Listen** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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# SESSION 8:

## YOUR FAMILY VALUES

**Welcome, Prayer & Review of LIFE Starter Journaling: 5 minutes**  
**Review #8 Teaching: 10 minutes**

I hope you gained more understanding of what a sabbath rest is SO important for your relationship and how being intentional about getting “un-busy” is SO IMPORTANT! With everything you have learned in this Covenant study about the seriousness of YOUR marriage promise, we are now going to evaluate your “family Values!” Taking the time to figure out your family values is a transformative experience. As a couple and as parents, one of our biggest jobs is to help our family develop their own God-given internal compass – a framework to help them make decisions when we aren’t around. But with all of the outside influences we experience today, how can we make sure that we really understand what qualities and traits are important to our family? One way is to create a family mission statement. The family mission statement is a concept described in Stephen Covey’s 1989 book *“7 Habits of Highly Effective Families.”* Many successful corporations craft mission statements so that all employees can work together toward a common goal. Covey contends that families, like businesses, need common goals and values to function well:

***“A family mission statement is a combined, unified expression from all family members of what your family is all about – what it is you really want to do and be – and the principles you choose to govern your family life.” – Stephen Covey***

A family mission statement is a starting point in the unfolding map of your family’s journey. Not only does it create the basis for family interaction and a goal to which every family member can contribute, most importantly, it establishes the framework for family direction and decisions.

### **Small Group Discussion: 25 minutes**

- What do you want your kids to remember about your family life?
- When people look at your family what would you want them to see?
- What values do you place on your possessions & status, and does it line up with God’s Word?
- How will your family understand God’s character as seen through your example?
- How does your family communicate—both in times of conflict and peace?
- What families inspire you? What about them do you want to emulate?
- What do you want your family to look like in 20 years?
- Discuss the value of this exercise to YOUR family. Will you do it?

### **Small Group Wrap-Up: 15 minutes**

What were the biggest take-aways and action items? Group Discussion: 15 minutes

## Homework: 5 minutes

### **WHY: Create a Family Mission Statement?**

The best time to begin creating a family culture is as early as possible (like right now!). A family mission statement lays out a vision for your family of where you want to go and how you want to get there. It provides a path and guideposts pointing the way ahead and illuminating the curves and bumps along the way. Having a shared vision – a shared sense of values and purpose – bonds families together. It guides your parenting decisions and offers your children clear ideals to strive for and guidance in what choices to make. A mission statement also articulates the standards by which each member of the family can evaluate each other's behavior, and children and parents will ideally check and encourage one another as they make their way down this agreed upon path. Another benefit is that a family mission statement serves to distinguish your family from others – providing its members a sense of meaning and identity and giving your children the feeling of being part of something important and special.

### **HOW: Where to begin**

The purpose of this activity will help you to learn what's most important to each person in your family; your values. When you talk about what you value, it can help you to get along better in the future. Values are deeply held views of what we find worthwhile. Talking about our values together as a family can help us to understand our motivation behind our actions and be used as a decision making tool.

#### Tips:

- Spend time really thinking about your personal values and what they mean to you. Don't just pick words quickly. This is not just an intellectual exercise. It should also have a connection with your feelings.
- When you start the family exercise, listen and ask questions. The intention is to explore and learn about one another's values, not to impose your values on others.
- At the end, take time to reflect on what was most meaningful about your conversation.

### **Step 1. Together with your spouse answer the following questions:**

- Why did we get married?
- Why did we start a family?
- What do we want our family to look like in 20 years?
- What do we want our children to learn from us?
- Do any scriptures come to mind that we want our family to live by?
- What makes our family unique?
- What are the noticeable gifts and strengths of each member of the family?
- What are the noticeable weaknesses for each member of the family?
- When is our family at its best?
- When is our family at its worst?
- What is our family's favorite way to spend time together?
- What are practical ways we can serve one another?
- What three words best describe our family?
- What do other people say about our family?
- What do we want others to say about our family?
- How do people feel when they walk into our home?
- How do we want people to feel when they walk into our home?
- What is the main purpose of our home?
- What is the secondary purpose of our home?
- How can we support one another in our collective goals?
- What families inspire us?
- What about them do we want to emulate?

**Step 2.** Together with your spouse, from the list below, pick the ten words or phrases that are most important to you and line up with your Personal Values. Feel free to add your own words!

**Parents' Words**

**Kids' Words**

- |   |  |                                 |
|---|--|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> accountability       | doing what you say you will do                     | achievement reaching your goals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> balance (home/work)  | balancing school, work and play time               |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> commitment           | working hard on what we believe in                 |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> compassion           | being kind and understanding                       |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> competence           | being good at what you do                          |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> continuous learning  | always learning                                    |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cooperation          | working well with other people                     |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> courage              | being brave  |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> creativity           | using your imagination                             |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> enthusiasm           | being excited and confident                        |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> efficiency           | making good use of time                            |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ethics               | doing the right thing                              |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellence           | doing excellent work or sport                      |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fairness             | being fair   |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> family               | family   |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> financial stability  | having enough money                                |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> friendship           | having friends                                     |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> future generations   | caring about children of the future                |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> health               | keeping healthy                                    |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> honesty              | telling the truth                                  |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> humor/fun            | laughing and having fun                            |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> independence         | able to do things on your own                      |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> integrity            | being honest, trustworthy and live a balanced life |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> initiative           | making decisions for yourself                      |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> making a difference  | making life better for others                      |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> open communication   | talking openly and freely with others              |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> openness             | telling others about thoughts and feelings         |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> personal fulfillment | having a full and happy life                       |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> personal growth      | improving myself                                   |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> respect              | showing respect                                    |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> responsibility       | being responsible                                  |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> risk-taking          | being brave to try something new                   |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> self discipline      | controlling my behavior                            |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> success              | being successful                                   |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> trust                | trusting others                                    |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> wisdom               | being wise   |                                 |

**Step 3.** Be sure to include fun values as well as more serious values. Your list will likely be very long initially. You might need to get together more than once to whittle it down. The end goal of creating your family mission statement, which will be a memorable sentence or short paragraph. When you are ready, pick your top three words from the above list and go on to **Step 4.**

**Step 4.** Now that you have identified your three family values, complete the worksheet below:

Write down your 3 most important values:	Why are these values important to you?	How do you show people these values? What are your behaviors?
1.		
2.		
3.		

**Step 5.** Now that you have identified your three family values, apply Scripture to each value. (Tip: Go to <https://www.openbible.info/topics/> and type in your values to match Scripture verses.)

**Step 6.** Discuss what you've learned from this exercise with each other and write a narrative of values and how you plan to live those values from your list above. This narrative becomes your family mission statement. It's important that you take the time to really talk about it and own it. The real learning occurs when you slow down, connect, and listen with your hearts and then activate what you've learned. Taking the time to figure out what your family is meant to be a transformative experience.

## **Sample Family Mission Statements:**

### **#1: The Jones Family Mission Statement:**

The mission of our family is to create a nurturing place of ministry. We will first minister to the needs within our family, first between husband and wife and then to our children. We will cultivate a loving atmosphere where we can grow closer to each other and to God. As a family and individually, we will then minister to others as a reflection of our faith in Christ.

### **#2: The Criswell Family Mission Statement:**

More than anything else, it is our desire that this family be built around God's plan, purpose, and desire for the family. We will reflect Him in everything we do.

- We will be a family of worship. Both formally and informally, at church and at home, worship will be a priority in our life.
- We will be a family of prayer. Together and individually, we will pray for and with each other, about everything.
- We will be a family of service. We will serve each other within our family, and we will serve each other in the world around us.

## **What to Do with Your Family Mission Statement:**

Now that you have developed a family mission statement, post it anywhere your family can refer to it often.

***Refer to your family mission statement daily and try to memorize the words, write them on your hearts, in order that you may live them out loud.***

Your family mission statement can now be the foundation by which all of your decisions, plans and routines are established.

### **Other ideas for displaying your mission statement:**

- Frame it as a wall decoration
- Post it on your bathroom mirror
- Put it in your Bible
- Put it with your calendar
- Use it as a background on your phone or computer

In the end, your mission statement will be your go-to resource when making ALL decisions!

# SESSION #8

## WK. 7 DEVO 1

### **Read 2 Corinthians 10**

*How do we consistently “sow” thoughts that make us into the people God intends us to be?*

**L=Listen** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you’re studying. After you’ve read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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# SESSION #8

## WK. 8 DEVO 2

### **Read Romans 12**

*How does the renewing of our minds and focus on Biblical values impact in our daily lives?*

**L=Listen** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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# SESSION #8

## WK. 8 DEVO 3

### **Read Hebrews 10**

*Our transformational process is not instantaneous, as it's a process wherein the Holy Spirit writes God's laws on our hearts (Heb. 10:16). We are not passive participants in this process—we have an essential, active part to play. Journal about the part YOU need to play!*

**L=Listen** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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# SESSION #8

## WK. 8 DEVO 4

### **Read Joshua 1**

*We read in Joshua: "Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful." Constant renewal is necessary for flourishing with our values! As we are committed to the transformative process, we must be actively seeking out the wisdom of God's principles found in His Word. The Bible underscores the importance of studying God's word on a daily basis to allow our Biblical values to stay alive.*

**L=Listen** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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# **SESSION 9: SHARING YOUR FAMILY MISSION STATEMENT AND PLAN**

**Welcome and Share your Family Mission Statements: 30 minutes**  
**Small Group Discussion: Assessment and Future Commitments: 15 min**

**Also, reflect back on this program and talk about how your perspective is different:**

- **What is MORE important to now?**
- **How have your beliefs shifted?**
- **Is your heart different for Jesus? Do you FEEL Him? Why or why not?**
- **How will you interact with your spouse and family differently?**
- **How will you interact with God differently?**
- **What are the radical changes you need to make your family mission statement come alive and how will you execute these changes?**

**Small Group Wrap-Up: How can this study be improved?: 15 minutes**

- **What are the top THREE takeaways from this study?**
- **What about this study could be improved to have MORE IMPACT?**
- **Was the LIFE Method of Journalling helpful and did you actually do it? Why or why not?**
- **Would you refer others for this class? Why or why not?**
- **Are you ready to participate in the NEXT LIFE Study?**

**Be part of this movement and give us your feedback please!**

- **Write out a testimony about how this class changed your parenting.**
- **Shoot a short 2-minute testimony video if you feel led.**
- **Fill out the assessment forms (emailed tomorrow).**
- **Consider your involvement in the next semester classes (also emailed).**

**Please take the time to give us feedback, as we want to improve these classes and have the biggest impact for God's Kingdom and generations to come!**

## **Homework: Final Assessment/Review**

**Covenant with Your Spouse: Igniting YOUR Promise for LIFE**

**"Success in marriage does not come merely through finding the right mate, but through being the right mate." – Barnett R. Brickner**

I pray this class heightened your **covenantal commitment** for your marriage. **Make a commitment to PRAY together every day as a couple!** Your obedience to this spiritual discipline will remind you who really is the Source of strength in your marriage and keep you connected and communicating.

**Second**, take the opportunity to grow in **selflessness**, as you serve your spouse and children. At its core, love is a decision to be committed to another person. Feelings come and go, but a true decision to be committed lasts for a life time—and that is what defines healthy marriages. In fact, more marriages are broken up by selfishness than any other reason. A selfish person is committed only to himself or herself, shows little patience, and never learns how to be a successful spouse.

Third, Learn to **forgive** and **DON'T be offended** — Because no one is perfect, patience and forgiveness will always be required in a marriage relationship. Successful marriage partners learn to show unending patience and forgiveness to their partner. They humbly admit their own faults and do not expect perfection from their partner. They do not bring up past errors in an effort to hold their partner hostage. **They chose to be UNOFFENDABLE**, and they do not seek to get revenge when mistakes occur. If you are holding onto a past hurt from your partner, forgive him or her. It will set your heart and relationship free.

Fourth, **Invest the time** — Relationships with each other and WITH GOD don't work without **time investment**. Any successful relationship requires intentional, quantity time together. Remember, **quality time** rarely happens when quantity time is absent. The relationship with your spouse should be the **SECOND** most intimate (**God being FIRST**) and deep relationship you have, so, it is going to require time. If possible, set aside time each day for your spouse and have a regular date-night. This is a simple call to value our marriages, treat them with great care, and invest in them daily.

Finally, do what you promised. Don't let temptations and heartaches keep you from loving each other unconditionally, from caring for each other "in sickness and in health," or from finishing strong in your marriage. Also, **urge others to keep their covenant**. We need to band together to fight divorce. We serve a God who said: **"I hate divorce"** (Malachi 2:16). We need to combat divorce in the most positive way—**by honoring our covenants** and encouraging others to do the same. Together we can become known in our culture as the keepers and protectors of the marriage covenant.

**Renewed devotion to the marriage covenant will be a significant factor in helping countless couples stick to their vows and achieve the satisfaction and joy God wants from marriage.**