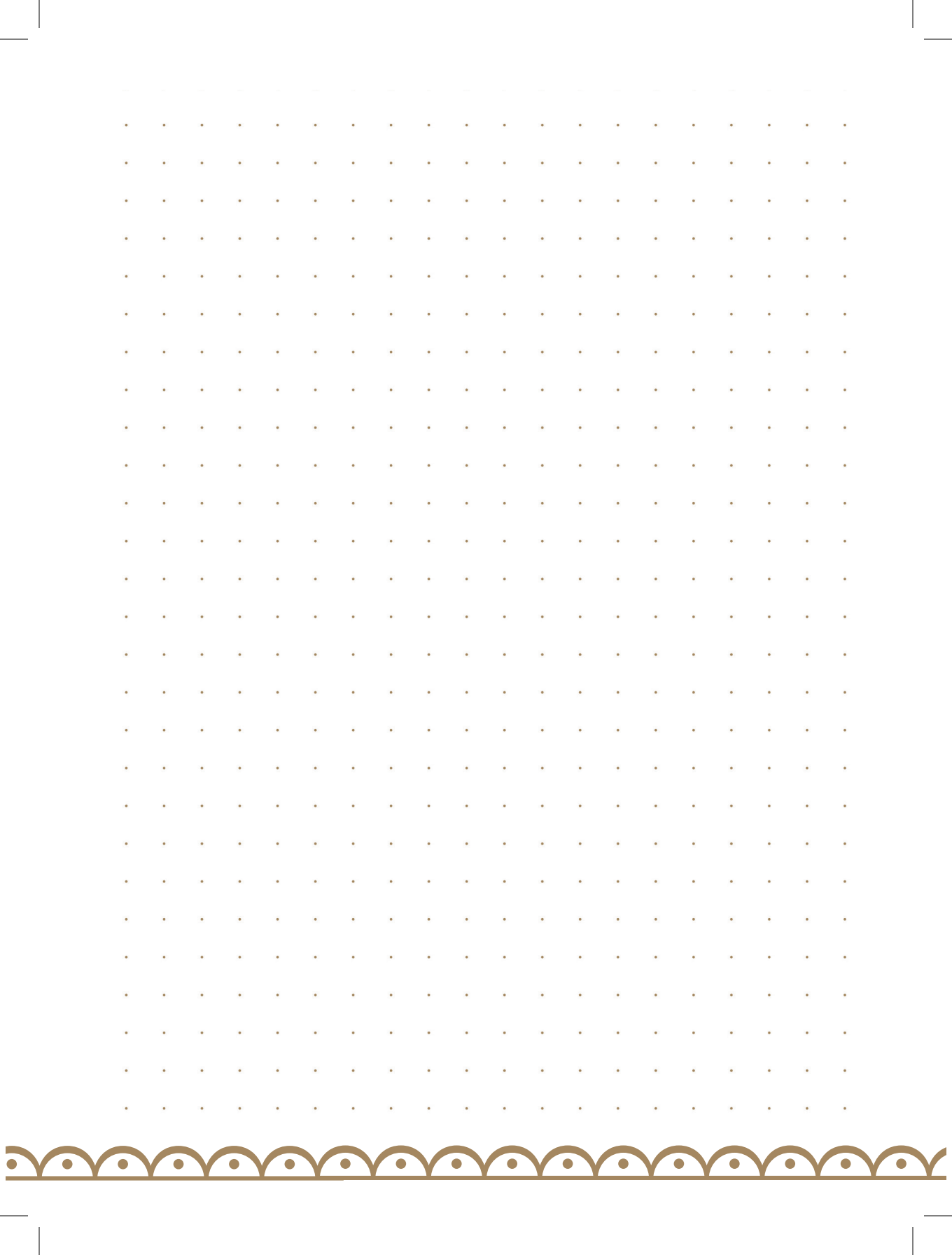






RETREAT

Session One Notes





Solitude Time | Saturday Morning

John 3:1-21

There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. “Rabbi,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you.”

Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.”

“What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus. “How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?”

Jesus replied, “I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. So don’t be surprised when I say, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can’t tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can’t explain how people are born of the Spirit.”

“How are these things possible?” Nicodemus asked.

Jesus replied, “You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don’t understand these things? I assure you, we tell you what we know and have seen, and yet you won’t believe our testimony. But if you don’t believe me when I tell you about earthly things, how can you possibly believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ever gone to heaven and returned. But the Son of Man has come down from heaven. And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.

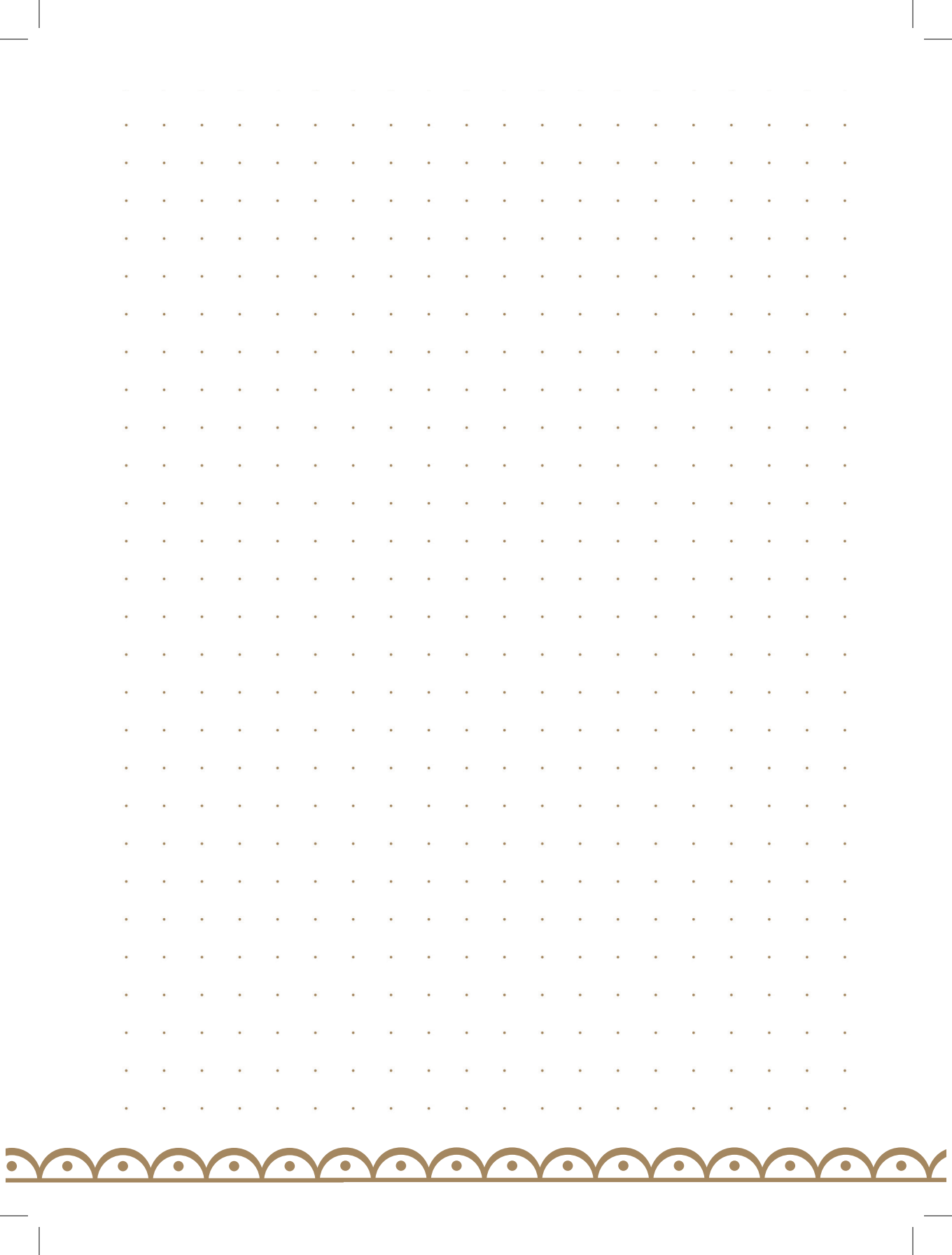
“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.

“There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God’s one and only Son. And the judgment is based on this fact: God’s light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants.”

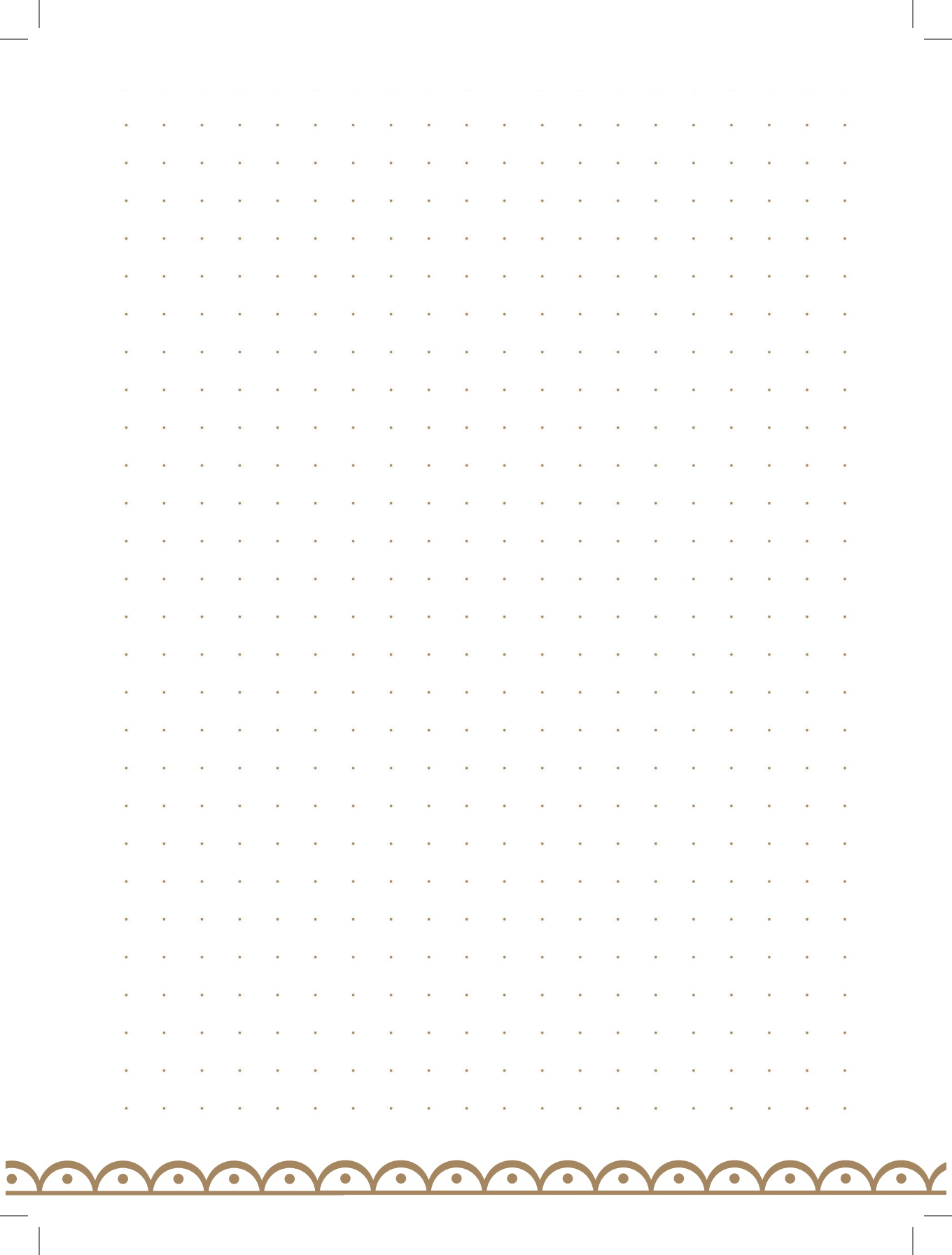


- 7

Session Two Notes



Session Three Notes





Solitude Time | Sunday Morning

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

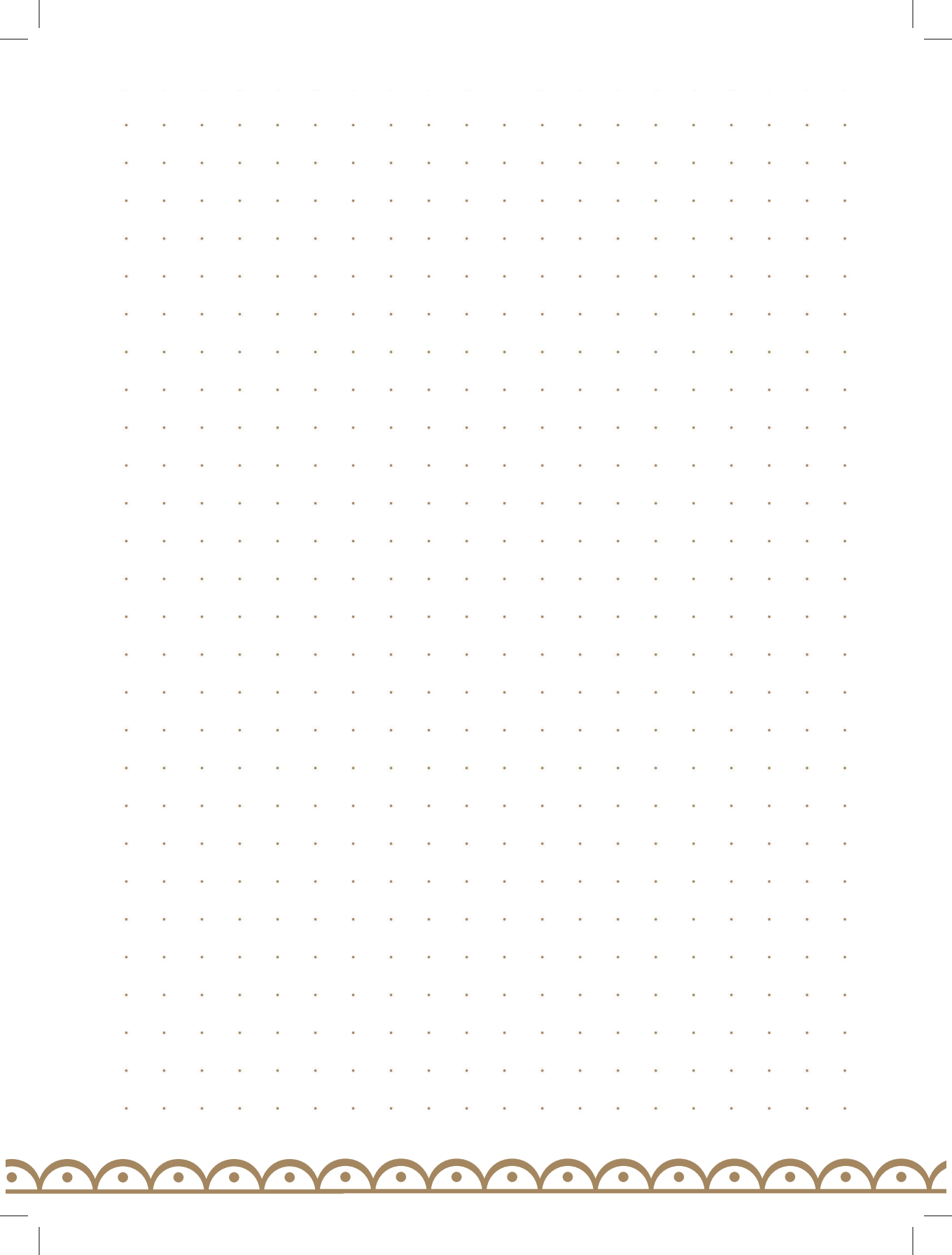
Reflection

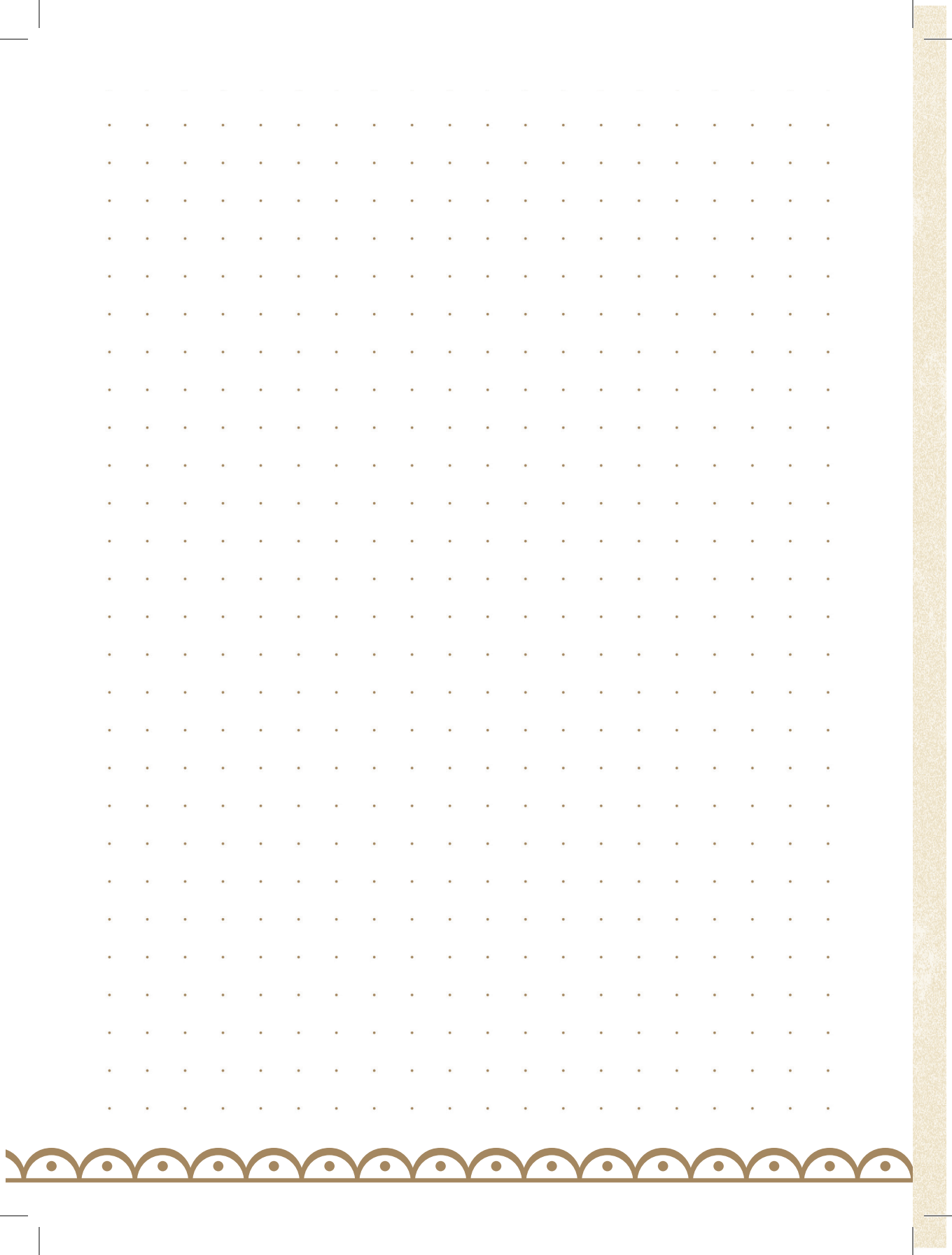
1. What does it mean for us to have a new life in Christ?

2. How are you called to live in response to being given a new life?

Spend a minute writing out a prayer of thanksgiving for the new life you have been given through the sacrifice that Jesus made for you.

Session Four Notes





WEEK

1

RETREAT RECAP



Detreat Deflection

- ## Detreat Deflection

3. What questions do you still have about Revival and being made new?

4. Spend time writing out a prayer for how you want the Lord to continue working in and through you after the retreat. In what areas do you want to grow?

- What do you need to confess and repent of in light of the things we talked about over the weekend?

- How are you grateful for what he has already done in your life?



A New Purpose

2 Corinthians 5:11-21

Because we understand our fearful responsibility to the Lord, we work hard to persuade others. God knows we are sincere, and I hope you know this, too. Are we commending ourselves to you again? No, we are giving you a reason to be proud of us, so you can answer those who brag about having a spectacular ministry rather than having a sincere heart. If it seems we are crazy, it is to bring glory to God. And if we are in our right minds, it is for your benefit. Either way, Christ's love controls us. Since we believe that Christ died for all, we also believe that we have all died to our old life. He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them.

So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now! This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

Reflection

"He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves." The idea of being made new contradicts all of life. In this world, our bodies, our minds, and the things around us grow old, need to be replaced, and eventually die. Jesus is offering new life through his death and resurrection for all who believe and follow him. This new life is a gift from God that paves a way for us to have a restored relationship with him. But, in that new life, we no longer live for ourselves. Those who follow Jesus no longer look like the rest of the world. We are a people that are called to live holy lives, set apart from the rest of the world.

- 21



A Living Sacrifice

1 Corinthians 12

Now, dear brothers and sisters, regarding your question about the special abilities the Spirit gives us. I don't want you to misunderstand this. You know that when you were still pagans, you were led astray and swept along in worshipping speechless idols. So I want you to know that no one speaking by the Spirit of God will curse Jesus, and no one can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit.

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.

A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.

The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit.

Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. If the foot says, "I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand," that does not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear says, "I am not part of the body because I am not an eye," would that make it any less a part of the body? If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything?

But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. How strange a body would be if it had only one part! Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. The eye can never say to the hand, "I don't need you." The head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you."

In fact, some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually the most necessary. And the parts we regard as less honorable are those we clothe with the greatest care. So we carefully protect those parts that should not be seen, while the more honorable parts do not require this special care. So God has put the body together such that extra honor and care are given to those parts that have less dignity. This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad.

All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it. Here are some of the parts God has appointed for the church:

first are apostles,
second are prophets,
third are teachers,
then those who do miracles,
those who have the gift of healing,
those who can help others,
those who have the gift of leadership,
those who speak in unknown languages.

Are we all apostles? Are we all prophets? Are we all teachers? Do we all have the power to do miracles? Do we all have the gift of healing? Do we all have the ability to speak in unknown languages? Do we all have the ability to interpret unknown languages? Of course not! So you should earnestly desire the most helpful gifts.

But now let me show you a way of life that is best of all.

Reflection

The word sacrifice means that you give up something important for the sake of someone else. Verse 12 instructs us to be holy, living sacrifices. It's not saying that we must give a sacrifice, but that our lives are to be the sacrifice. Believers are called to lay their lives down for the sake of others. This is how we live in worship daily. What does that look like? It looks like using the gifts that the Lord has blessed you with as a way to serve and love those around you. Your strengths must be stewarded in a way that advances the Kingdom of God. On the other hand, you must also be honest with yourself and others around you about what your weaknesses are. Only then will you be able to truly fight against temptation and walk in obedience. Being a living sacrifice requires us to put ourselves aside and be transformed by the work God is doing.

WEEK

2

NEW INHERITANCE
& COUNTRY



The Good News

Galatians 4:1-7

Think of it this way. If a father dies and leaves an inheritance for his young children, those children are not much better off than slaves until they grow up, even though they actually own everything their father had. They have to obey their guardians until they reach whatever age their father set. And that's the way it was with us before Christ came. We were like children; we were slaves to the basic spiritual principles of this world.

But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children. And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, "Abba, Father." Now you are no longer a slave but God's own child. And since you are his child, God has made you his heir.

Hebrews 2:10-18

God, for whom and through whom everything was made, chose to bring many children into glory. And it was only right that he should make Jesus, through his suffering, a perfect leader, fit to bring them into their salvation.

So now Jesus and the ones he makes holy have the same Father. That is why Jesus is not ashamed to call them his brothers and sisters. For he said to God,

"I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters.

I will praise you among your assembled people."

He also said,

"I will put my trust in him,"

that is, "I and the children God has given me."

Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death. Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying.

We also know that the Son did not come to help angels; he came to help the descendants of Abraham. Therefore, it was necessary for him to be made in every respect like us, his brothers and sisters, so that he could be our merciful and faithful High Priest before God. Then he could offer a sacrifice that would take away the sins of the people. Since he himself has gone through suffering and testing, he is able to help us when we are being tested.

Reflection

The word *gospel* simply means “good news,” but sometimes it can be difficult to wrap our minds around how good the news really is. The gift God offers is not only the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life, but God also brings us into his family. Unlike our earthly families, this new family is eternal and filled with promise for something bigger and greater than ourselves. Galatians 4 tells us that Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters, and we get to call God “Abba, father,” the same intimate title Jesus uses for God. Being a part of God’s family means that we get to experience a deep, rich relationship with God and the community he blesses us with.

1. In your own words, using Galatians 4:1–7, describe what it means that God adopted us into his family.
2. Think about your own family. How has your experience impacted the way you view God as a father?



Our Inheritance

Ephesians 1:5-14

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.

God has now revealed to us his mysterious will regarding Christ—which is to fulfill his own good plan. And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth. Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan.

God's purpose was that we Jews who were the first to trust in Christ would bring praise and glory to God. And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.

Psalms 16:5-11

Lord, you alone are my inheritance, my cup of blessing.

You guard all that is mine.

The land you have given me is a pleasant land.

What a wonderful inheritance!

I will bless the Lord who guides me;

even at night my heart instructs me.

I know the Lord is always with me.

I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me.

No wonder my heart is glad, and I rejoice.

My body rests in safety.

For you will not leave my soul among the dead

or allow your holy one to rot in the grave.

You will show me the way of life,

granting me the joy of your presence

and the pleasures of living with you forever.

Reflection

From the very beginning, God's plan was for us to be united in Christ, and everything in heaven and on earth would be ruled by him. This passage from Ephesians tells us this mystery was revealed in the death and resurrection of Christ. God, in his rich kindness, has held nothing back from us—everything we could ever need is being held out for us to take. That is why the Psalmist says that the Lord alone is his inheritance. Even before Christ came, the psalmist was sure that God was the source of all blessings and life.

1. Go through the passages above and highlight all of the blessings we inherit as children of God.
2. The definition of inheritance is something important or valuable that is passed down from one generation to the next. What is the ultimate inheritance we receive from God, and how were we able to receive it?



A New Way of Living

Romans 8:12-17

Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.

Galatians 3:23-29

Before the way of faith in Christ was available to us, we were placed under guard by the law. We were kept in protective custody, so to speak, until the way of faith was revealed.

Let me put it another way. The law was our guardian until Christ came; it protected us until we could be made right with God through faith. And now that the way of faith has come, we no longer need the law as our guardian.

For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you.

Genesis 12:1-5

The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you."

Reflection

In this new family, we have a new life of freedom. When Jesus ascended, he sent the Holy Spirit to be his presence among us. He did not leave us alone, but instead gave us something far more powerful than just him alone. Now, through the Holy Spirit, Jesus' resurrection power lives among his followers. The Holy Spirit is not contained to a physical body like Jesus was; instead, he lives in and through all believers. Now, we do not have to live like we once did, trapped in our sinful ways. Although we still battle our sin nature, we can live freely, doing the will of God in our lives so that he may be glorified. The law was once what guided people towards obedience and right standing with him. Now, we are in right standing because of our faith in Jesus. It was nothing we could earn, but instead, it is something that we receive that gives us freedom. This is what our inheritance is when we are adopted into God's family!

1. Based on the passages above, name some things that God has freed you from.
2. Romans 8 tells us that we have no obligation to our sinful nature. What would it look like for you to “put to death the deeds of your sinful nature” and begin walking in freedom?



A New Country

Hebrews 11:12-16

And so a whole nation came from this one man who was as good as dead—a nation with so many people that, like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore, there is no way to count them.

All these people died still believing what God had promised them. They did not receive what was promised, but they saw it all from a distance and welcomed it. They agreed that they were foreigners and nomads here on earth. Obviously people who say such things are looking forward to a country they can call their own. If they had longed for the country they came from, they could have gone back. But they were looking for a better place, a heavenly homeland. That is why God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

1 Peter 2:9-11

But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.

“Once you had no identity as a people;

now you are God's people.

Once you received no mercy;

now you have received God's mercy.”

Dear friends, I warn you as “temporary residents and foreigners” to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls.

Reflection

Opting into God's family has great benefits, and many promises await us one day, but it also comes with a call to live as foreigners in this world. We are God's chosen people, a holy nation, and temporary residents of this world as Peter describes it. Part of our inheritance includes the promise of a new world, a new land, and a new nation. Our identity is wrapped in being God's people, with the promise of one day being a citizen of heaven. Therefore, we do not belong to the nation we live in right now. We do not have to be worried or consumed with the world around us because it's not our final home. This should give us great hope and encourage us to live set apart in the way we fight against our sin ("worldly desires").

1. What would it look like for you to live as a citizen of God's Kingdom in a way that is compelling to others?
2. How can you fight against worldly desires in order to live set apart from this world?

Notes

WEEK

3

NEW BODY & HOPE



What Does a New Body Mean?

1 Corinthians 15:55-58

But someone may ask, “How will the dead be raised? What kind of bodies will they have?” What a foolish question! When you put a seed into the ground, it doesn’t grow into a plant unless it dies first. And what you put in the ground is not the plant that will grow, but only a bare seed of wheat or whatever you are planting. Then God gives it the new body he wants it to have. A different plant grows from each kind of seed. Similarly there are different kinds of flesh—one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish.

There are also bodies in the heavens and bodies on the earth. The glory of the heavenly bodies is different from the glory of the earthly bodies. The sun has one kind of glory, while the moon and stars each have another kind. And even the stars differ from each other in their glory.

It is the same way with the resurrection of the dead. Our earthly bodies are planted in the ground when we die, but they will be raised to live forever. Our bodies are buried in brokenness, but they will be raised in glory. They are buried in weakness, but they will be raised in strength. They are buried as natural human bodies, but they will be raised as spiritual bodies. For just as there are natural bodies, there are also spiritual bodies.

The Scriptures tell us, “The first man, Adam, became a living person.” But the last Adam—that is, Christ—is a life-giving Spirit. What comes first is the natural body, then the spiritual body comes later. Adam, the first man, was made from the dust of the earth, while Christ, the second man, came from heaven. Earthly people are like the earthly man, and heavenly people are like the heavenly man. Just as we are now like the earthly man, we will someday be like the heavenly man.

What I am saying, dear brothers and sisters, is that our physical bodies cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These dying bodies cannot inherit what will last forever.

But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies.

Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled:

“Death is swallowed up in victory.

O death, where is your victory?

O death, where is your sting?”

For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.

So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless.

Reflection

Transformation means a thorough or dramatic change in the form, appearance, or character of something. 1 Corinthians tells us that our physical bodies will go through a complete transformation and death will no longer have power over them. Death is a consequence of sin entering the world. This means we experience injuries, aging, and disabilities that cause pain and suffering in our physical bodies. Believers, though, are promised that this pain and suffering does have an end. When we are raised from the dead, our physical bodies will be raised in glory—they will not experience decay but instead live forever. They will be raised in strength, made to inherit the Kingdom of God. For those still living, their bodies will be transformed into the spiritual bodies we are promised. Death has no hold on the power of Christ’s resurrection, and we are guaranteed that same victory!

1. Go through the Scripture above and highlight descriptions of what our resurrected bodies will be like.
2. What do you long for the Lord to heal about your own or a loved one’s physical body?



Living With Hope

2 Corinthians 5:1-10

For we know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken down (that is, when we die and leave this earthly body), we will have a house in heaven, an eternal body made for us by God himself and not by human hands. We grow weary in our present bodies, and we long to put on our heavenly bodies like new clothing. For we will put on heavenly bodies; we will not be spirits without bodies. While we live in these earthly bodies, we groan and sigh, but it's not that we want to die and get rid of these bodies that clothe us. Rather, we want to put on our new bodies so that these dying bodies will be swallowed up by life. God himself has prepared us for this, and as a guarantee he has given us his Holy Spirit.

So we are always confident, even though we know that as long as we live in these bodies we are not at home with the Lord. For we live by believing and not by seeing. Yes, we are fully confident, and we would rather be away from these earthly bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord. So whether we are here in this body or away from this body, our goal is to please him. For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in this earthly body.

Philippians 3:20-21

But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior. He will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same power with which he will bring everything under his control.

1 Peter 1:5-12

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay. And through your faith, God is protecting you by his power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see.

So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine.

It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.

You love him even though you have never seen him. Though you do not see him now, you trust him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy. The reward for trusting him will be the salvation of your souls.

This salvation was something even the prophets wanted to know more about when they prophesied about this gracious salvation prepared for you. They wondered what time or situation the Spirit of Christ within them was talking about when he told them in advance about Christ's suffering and his great glory afterward.

They were told that their messages were not for themselves, but for you. And now this Good News has been announced to you by those who preached in the power of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. It is all so wonderful that even the angels are eagerly watching these things happen.

Reflection

The promise of a new body is worth celebrating and longing for. And because of God's promise, we no longer have to fear death. Therefore, believers are in a season of waiting and expectation of what's to come. Today's passages tell us how to live in that waiting. 1 Peter says we should endure trials with joy and keep our faith strong. This season is not one of idleness, but a season where there is real work to be done. To hope means to have a sure and confident expectation of receiving what God has promised us in the future. We can live faithful, purpose-filled lives now because of the inheritance that is waiting for us in heaven. The expectation for our new bodies shapes the way we live now.

1. What trials are you enduring right now?
2. What would it look like for you to have confidence and hope in Jesus as you go through those hard times?



Until Heaven

Romans 8:18-25

Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later. For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope, the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us. We were given this hope when we were saved. (If we already have something, we don't need to hope for it. But if we look forward to something we don't yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently.)

1 Thessalonians 5:14-24

Brothers and sisters, we urge you to warn those who are lazy. Encourage those who are timid. Take tender care of those who are weak. Be patient with everyone.

See that no one pays back evil for evil, but always try to do good to each other and to all people.

Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

Do not stifle the Holy Spirit. Do not scoff at prophecies, but test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good. Stay away from every kind of evil.

Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. God will make this happen, for he who calls you is faithful.

Reflection

The promise of a new body should shape the way you live today. Not only does it give us assurance of something better, but it gives us so much to be grateful for. Even with trials and suffering, we are assured that the glory we receive in our resurrected bodies will be far greater than what we experienced here on earth. For some of us, this is hard to comprehend. You may have experienced suffering and pain and cannot imagine what future glory may be like. Or, you may love someone who has experienced suffering and long for them to have a new body. Whatever your story or experience with pain and suffering in our physical bodies may be, we are called to live holy and blameless lives that reflect God to the world. Whether he is glorified through our suffering or he is glorified because of our health, we have something sure and steady to place our hope in and be grateful for. This may cause tension for some of us, and that is okay. The best thing we can do is be honest about that and talk to someone we trust.

1. We have been promised completely new bodies, free from death and decay. How does that give you hope?
2. 1 Thessalonians says to be thankful in all circumstances. In what ways have you struggled to be thankful for the physical body God has given you on earth?

Notes

WEEK

4

NEW HEAVENS, NEW EARTH, & RESTORATION



What Will God's New Creation Be Like?

Isaiah 65:17-25

"Look! I am creating new heavens and a new earth,
and no one will even think about the old ones anymore.

Be glad; rejoice forever in my creation!

And look! I will create Jerusalem as a place of happiness.

Her people will be a source of joy.

I will rejoice over Jerusalem

and delight in my people.

And the sound of weeping and crying

will be heard in it no more.

"No longer will babies die when only a few days old.

No longer will adults die before they have lived a full life.

No longer will people be considered old at one hundred!

Only the cursed will die that young!

In those days people will live in the houses they build

and eat the fruit of their own vineyards.

Unlike the past, invaders will not take their houses

and confiscate their vineyards.

For my people will live as long as trees,

and my chosen ones will have time to enjoy their hard-won gains.

They will not work in vain,

and their children will not be doomed to misfortune.

For they are people blessed by the Lord,

and their children, too, will be blessed.

I will answer them before they even call to me.

While they are still talking about their needs,

I will go ahead and answer their prayers!

The wolf and the lamb will feed together.

The lion will eat hay like a cow.

But the snakes will eat dust.

In those days no one will be hurt or destroyed on my holy mountain.

I, the Lord, have spoken!"

Reflection

The parallels between the old and new world show God's intention for his creation to be whole once again. Sin entered the world through the first human, Adam, and in contrast, God redeems the world through his son, Jesus. Isaiah 65 tells us that God was always planning to make a way for us to be united back to him. Even when Jesus had not yet come to earth, God's people still had the promise that something greater was coming! The new heavens and new earth will not contain the brokenness that is in this world, but it will be new and pure. Verse 17 tells us that no one will even think about the old one. Not only will we live in the glory of the new heavens, but the old world will not even be a thought!

1. Considering all of the brokenness of this world, what do you look forward to in a restored creation?

2. How does the promise of something better shape the way you live your life today? Write down some of your thoughts and we'd encourage you to share it with your community (family, small group, etc.).



Who Will Be Part of the New Creation?

Isaiah 66:12-24

This is what the Lord says:

“I will give Jerusalem a river of peace and prosperity.

The wealth of the nations will flow to her.

Her children will be nursed at her breasts,
carried in her arms, and held on her lap.

I will comfort you there in Jerusalem
as a mother comforts her child.”

When you see these things, your heart will rejoice.

You will flourish like the grass!

Everyone will see the Lord’s hand of blessing on his servants—
and his anger against his enemies.

See, the Lord is coming with fire,
and his swift chariots roar like a whirlwind.

He will bring punishment with the fury of his anger
and the flaming fire of his hot rebuke.

The Lord will punish the world by fire
and by his sword.

He will judge the earth,
and many will be killed by him.

“Those who ‘consecrate’ and ‘purify’ themselves in a sacred garden with its idol in the center—feasting on pork and rats and other detestable meats—will come to a terrible end,” says the Lord.

“I can see what they are doing, and I know what they are thinking. So I will gather all nations and peoples together, and they will see my glory. I will perform a sign among them. And I will send those who survive to be messengers to the nations—to Tarshish, to the Libyans and Lydians (who are famous as archers), to Tubal and Greece, and to all the lands beyond the sea that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory. There they will declare my glory to the nations. They will bring the remnant of your people back from every nation. They will bring them to my holy mountain in Jerusalem as an offering to the Lord. They will ride on horses, in chariots and wagons, and on mules and camels,” says the Lord. “And I will appoint some of them to be my priests and Levites. I, the Lord, have spoken!

“As surely as my new heavens and earth will remain,

so will you always be my people,
with a name that will never disappear,”
says the Lord.
“All humanity will come to worship me
from week to week
and from month to month.
And as they go out, they will see
the dead bodies of those who have rebelled against me.
For the worms that devour them will never die,
and the fire that burns them will never go out.
All who pass by
will view them with utter horror.”

Reflection

“As surely as my new heavens and earth will remain, so will you always be my people.” The Scripture repeats over and over how sure and confident we can be in the promises that have been made to all who believe and follow God. Through these promises, we receive a new identity. The new family, new body, and new earth are all great, but what we really long for is intimacy and fullness that only comes from complete union with the Lord—this is what gives us value and identity. In the end, it will be clear who is part of God’s family and who is not. This new world will be full of blessings and abundance, but for those not in God’s family. Knowing what is coming for nonbelievers, our hearts should long for them to know the Lord. This future reality gives us a job for the present—to share the good news of Jesus Christ and to make God’s name great on this earth. What trials are you enduring right now?

1. Our lives are always changing, but God’s promises will endure. As believers, how does that give you hope for the new world God promises to us?

2. What’s in store for those who aren’t part of God’s family?
 - How does this change how you think about the responsibility to tell people about what Jesus did for us?



The Second Coming

Revelation 21:1-8

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, “Look, God’s home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.”

And the one sitting on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new!” And then he said to me, “Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true.” And he also said, “It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega—the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of the water of life. All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God, and they will be my children.

“But cowards, unbelievers, the corrupt, murderers, the immoral, those who practice witchcraft, idol worshipers, and all liars—their fate is in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”

Revelation 22:1-5

Then the angel showed me a river with the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb. It flowed down the center of the main street. On each side of the river grew a tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, with a fresh crop each month. The leaves were used for medicine to heal the nations.

No longer will there be a curse upon anything. For the throne of God and of the Lamb will be there, and his servants will worship him. And they will see his face, and his name will be written on their foreheads. And there will be no night there—no need for lamps or sun—for the Lord God will shine on them. And they will reign forever and ever.

Reflection

When Jesus returns, God is going to comfort his family. He will heal what's broken, make people whole, and make everything new. Throughout the series of Revival, we have talked about all the "new" we will gain because we are a part of God's family. When we say or read that God will make things new, we need to understand what that really means. God making things new means that He will redeem what was lost when mankind chose to sin and disobey him. It means that God does not leave us in our broken state, but he put a plan in place from the beginning of time to redeem his people and restore our unity with him. Being a believer is not about just no longer sinning and modifying our behaviors to be obedient—it's about so much more. We have an opportunity to be changed from the inside out because of the work God has already done on our behalf. God made the way possible. We can trust that he will continue to be faithful and all of these promises will come to fruition.

1. Circle phrases where you see how God cares for his people.
2. In light of everything we've learned about the new heavens and earth, how do you feel led to respond? Does it change your view of your relationship with God? Does it alter how you interact with this current world?

Notes

