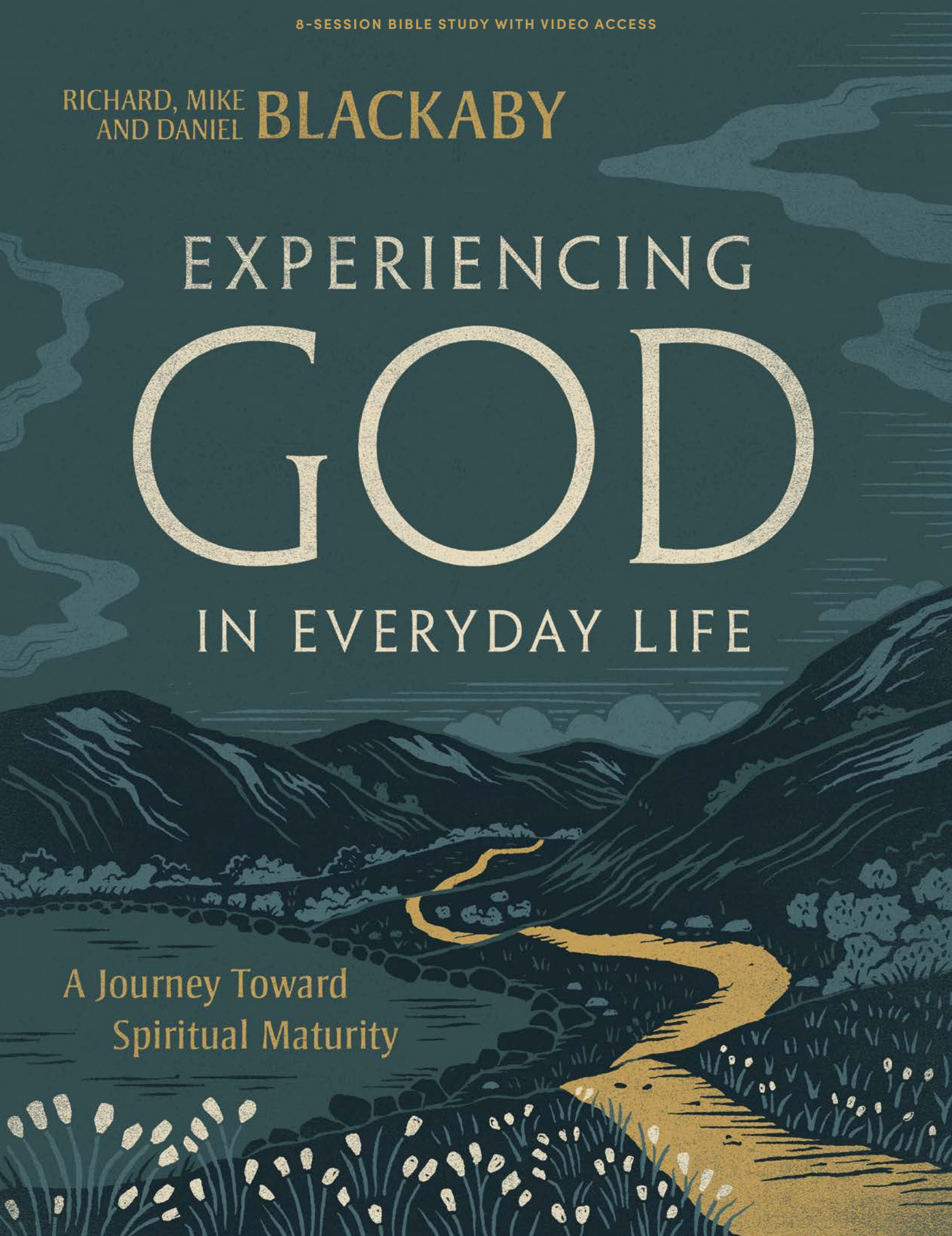


8-SESSION BIBLE STUDY WITH VIDEO ACCESS

RICHARD, MIKE  
AND DANIEL **BLACKABY**

EXPERIENCING  
**GOD**  
IN EVERYDAY LIFE

A Journey Toward  
Spiritual Maturity



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AND DANIEL **BLACKABY**

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IN EVERYDAY LIFE

*A Journey Toward Spiritual Maturity*

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# PREFACE

Welcome to *Experiencing God in Everyday Life: A Journey Toward Spiritual Maturity*. This material has been a long time in coming. In 1990, a relatively unknown man named Henry Blackaby was asked to write a book sharing the lessons he had learned as a pastor and church planter across western Canada. It was called *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God*. No one anticipated the response it received. People who had attended church all of their lives claimed to have experienced God personally for the first time. Many made major career changes, as they were swept up into God's work around the world. Translated into eighty languages, people around the globe have been deeply impacted by the book's biblical teaching.

The most common question people ask after completing the *Experiencing God* study is, "What's next?" After many years, the time felt right to write a sequel. After a life of faithful obedience to God, Henry Blackaby passed away in 2024. As his oldest son, I served as a field editor for the original *Experiencing God*, as well as a primary editor and author for two major revisions, where I also recorded teaching videos with my father and later with my son, Mike. My two sons, Mike and Daniel, Henry's oldest grandchildren, co-authored this sequel with me.

This book is not intended to replace the original but to supplement and complement the life-changing truths it taught. People may wonder, "How is this new book different from the last one?" Many people who studied *Experiencing God* had a "mountaintop experience" and desired more. However, when they finished that study and the routines of life became "normal" again, they worried that they were missing something. Isn't experiencing God always characterized by the miraculous and spectacular? If you go through your week without having a significant "God story" happen to you, did you miss God?

*Experiencing God* helped ordinary people learn that God could do extraordinary things through them. But what if instead of continually looking for the next "mountaintop experience," we also learned to experience God in the "valleys"

of everyday life? After all, this is where most of our lives are spent. Can we experience God there too? *Experiencing God in Everyday Life* was written to remind people that not every encounter with God seems spectacular, though each one is important. God is at work in the valleys of life, just as He is on the mountaintops—and He invites you to join Him.

This book focuses on spiritual maturity. We are gratified that people benefited much from studying *Experiencing God*, but the key to spiritual maturity is not the number of Bible studies you participate in but what type of spiritual rhythms you develop in your life. The spiritually mature person is not the one who can string together the most spiritual highs but the one who develops a deep, abiding relationship with God consistently over time. This doesn't happen by accident, and it cannot be accomplished in just a six- or eight- or twelve-week study. Spiritual maturity is a life-long journey that happens as you intentionally seek to align yourself with God and His purposes. Wherever you are on your journey, this book is designed to guide you further down that road.

*Experiencing God in Everyday Life* will encourage you to develop healthy spiritual habits as a lifestyle, so that your spiritual maturity grows steadily over time. Each unit of study invites individuals and groups to cultivate spiritual habits. These will help you implement and apply the learned spiritual truths into everyday life and lead to lasting change. We pray this book equips you to continue to grow spiritually long after you've read the last page.

Writing this material with my two sons was a joy. I think my father would be pleased that his children and grandchildren have embraced his teaching and continue to spread it around the world. Dad always said that he did not want to merely create another course; he wanted to provide an opportunity for people to truly experience God. We pray that this will be your experience as you engage with this new material.

Richard Blackaby  
President, Blackaby Ministries International

# HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

*Experiencing God in Everyday Life: A Journey Toward Spiritual Maturity* builds off the foundational teaching of *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God*. This study works through eight “realities” or central truths that guide us on a journey toward spiritual maturity. Each unit of study focuses on one of these realities of experiencing God in everyday life. The eight units of study include two divisions: personal study and group study.

## PERSONAL STUDY

*Each unit includes five days of personal study.*

**Day 1** introduces the reality being considered in the unit through a story, then further unpacks that reality through Scripture reading, commentary, and questions. At the end of day 1, you will find your weekly rhythm.

**Weekly Rhythm** Each unit of study invites you to begin practicing spiritual habits that coincide with the reality being taught in that unit. Participants are encouraged to choose one or more spiritual habits to “practice” throughout the week.

The habits are not just additional activities to clutter up your busy life; they are strategic actions to cultivate new rhythms in your life and lead you to take steps toward spiritual maturity.

Additional information about the spiritual habits you’ll be developing can be found on the next two pages. Special “habit cards” can be downloaded, printed, and used as visual reminders as you are establishing new spiritual rhythms.

**Days 2-4** further examine different aspects and applications of the week’s reality with Scripture reading, commentary, illustrations, and reflective questions.

**Day 5** The personal study ends with a **rhythm reflection** designed to help you reflect on your week, and establish and evaluate your spiritual rhythms.

## GROUP STUDY

Each unit of study includes group study. Being in biblical community with other Christians is essential for our spiritual health and maturity.

The group experience includes questions to help your group reflect on their week of personal study (Look Back), discuss the video teaching (Lean in Together), and find help and accountability in establishing spiritual rhythms (Look Forward).

## ADDITIONAL TOOLS

For additional tools and resources, visit [lifeway.com/egeveryday](https://lifeway.com/egeveryday) for leader helps, print-outs, and supplemental resources. You'll also find free downloadable resources to help you promote the study.



Scan the QR code to download printable habit cards. Use these cards as visible reminders of your spiritual habits.

# Establishing a RHYTHM OF LIFE

Each unit in *Experiencing God in Everyday Life* will give you the opportunity to establish sustainable spiritual habits. You will be invited to establish spiritual rhythms on a daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual basis.

Spiritual habits are biblical practices that draw us into deeper relationship with God. They aren't activities we perform to check a box but patterns that focus our attention away from ourselves and onto God and His eternal purposes. You don't earn any favor from God by pursuing these habits, nor will you be more mature simply because you practice them. However, if you consistently focus on God and His purposes, you will experience spiritual growth. The Scriptures refer to this as *remaining in Christ*. Jesus said:

Remain in me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me.

**John 15:4-5**

In many fruit-bearing plants, fruit grows on the branches that sprout from vines. The branches of the plant draw their life from the vine. As that connection is sustained over time, healthy branches bear fruit. So it is with our relationship with Jesus. Our spiritual habits connect us to the Vine, and that connection sustains spiritual health and produces fruit.

Just as your everyday life is filled with many routines and practices (wake up, get ready, commute to work, take children to appointments), your spiritual life is as well. The sum of your spiritual habits is your “rhythm of life”—the ongoing way you will make time and space to remain in Christ.

Spiritual maturity rarely happens by accident. Taking the time to plan for your spiritual growth is not meant to constrain you but to help you intentionally pursue Christ. Some habits you will try, grow from, and continue; others you will try and discontinue or come back to at a later time. The habits that reinforce your rhythm of life are not a set of unbreakable laws. Your habits will need to adapt as the seasons of your life change. Consistency over time is the goal. What works today may not be feasible or effective in the future.

This study invites you to form two primary types of spiritual habits: **short-term and long-term**.

**Short-term habits** are those we pursue on a daily or weekly basis. These habits are the time-tested building blocks for a rule of life—like gratitude, silence, giving, and community.

**Long-term habits** are those which might require more dedicated time or attention. We pursue these on a monthly, quarterly, or yearly basis—habits like fasting, retreating, or prolonged periods of silence and reflection.

The study ends with **legacy habits** for passing faith on to the next generation.

At the beginning of this study, let's consider **foundational habits**. These are the spiritual practices that all followers of Jesus should engage in day by day, week by week, over the course of their lives. While there are many such habits, here are five essential ones to start implementing today.

## Foundational Habits

AT ALL TIMES

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### 1. BIBLE INTAKE

The Scriptures are the primary way we hear from God. Whether by reading or by listening, seek to engage the Scriptures daily to hear from God.

---

### 2. PRAYER

Prayer is the primary way we communicate with God. Scripture commands us to pray at all times. Our lives should be characterized by a prayerful openness to God.

---

### 3. GIVING

God grants us the opportunity to partner with Him in His work in the world. One of the primary ways we do this is through financial giving. Our generosity supports God's work and grows our trust and dependence on Him.

---

### 4. COMMUNITY

The church is a gift from God. We are called to live in community with other Christians. Seek to be a part of a local congregation where you can serve God and develop God-centered relationships with others.

---

### 5. WORSHIP

Worship is our whole-life response to God. His glory and character demand our praise.



Scan the QR code to download printable habit cards. Use these cards as visible reminders of your spiritual habits.

**PART 1**

# WALKING WITH GOD





GOD DRAWS  
YOU INTO  
HIS ETERNAL  
PURPOSES

**VERSE TO MEMORIZE**

For it is God who is working in  
you both to will and to work  
according to his good purpose.

**PHILIPPIANS 2:13**

# DAY 1

## EMBRACING GOD'S PURPOSES, ONE DAY AT A TIME

God used Henry Blackaby, beloved author of *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God*, to impact millions of people around the world. He traveled the globe preaching to large audiences and meeting with world leaders. He wrote many popular books and mentored corporate CEOs. Those who knew him best, however, recognized that these “big” moments were not what defined his life and legacy. Most of Henry’s life consisted of countless hours of seemingly “ordinary” experiences. He approached each day with an awareness of God’s presence, eagerly waiting for the opportunity to participate in God’s activity around him. How we spend the ordinary, non-glamorous moments of our lives shapes and defines us.

Two decades before writing *Experiencing God*, Henry was called to serve as the pastor of Faith Baptist Church—a small congregation located on the sparsely populated prairies of western Canada, with only ten members. When Henry announced he was leaving a thriving church in California to help a dying church in Saskatchewan, some of his friends were concerned. One pastor warned, “Henry, if you move to Canada, no one will know where you are.” Henry replied, “God will know.”

Henry watched as God revived that dying church and led them to begin planting many more churches in the surrounding area. One Tuesday, Henry was preparing for a two-hour drive north to lead a weekly Bible study at their mission church. At the edge of town, he called to check on his wife Marilyn. She was in tears; it had been a stressful day for her. She urged Henry to go, assuring him she would be OK.

He drove ninety lonely miles to lead the Bible study. Upon his arrival, he discovered that no one had chosen to attend. Instead of being angry or frustrated about what might appear to be a devastating waste of time, Henry spent that hour alone, praying for the fledgling church. He came to consider that evening and the drive home some of the sweetest communion with God in worship he had ever experienced.

The most impactful encounters with God are often not in the “big” moments, but in experiences we have along the way. These add up and shape us over time. Henry experienced sublime pleasure in God’s presence. He found joy any time he experienced God, habitually rising at 4:00 a.m. to meet with

his Lord. His countenance glowed as he reverently told his children what God had shown him in the Scriptures that morning. Meeting with God was the most important item on his schedule. Some people start their day with God out of a sense of obligation or a desire to seek spiritual wisdom for the coming tasks. For Henry, walking with Jesus did not *lead to* a reward; Jesus *was* the reward.

Not long after Henry passed away in 2024, remembrances came pouring in. Curiously, not many people mentioned the sermons he preached, though he had preached powerful ones. Instead, they recalled how, as he spoke with them, he had given them his undivided attention. Several recalled how something he said as they transported him to or from the airport changed their life. One man recalled a time when he was unexpectedly given the opportunity to speak with Henry: “Those ten minutes changed my life.”

Henry lived with a profound awareness that God was actively at work. Whether speaking to a large audience or just one person, visiting the White House or making a long commute to an empty Bible study room, Henry was aware of God’s presence and was always ready to join God’s work around him. Every moment with God was important as he learned to see God in the countless opportunities present throughout the routines of each day.

1 Conventional wisdom might see Henry’s long drive to an empty Bible study as a failure. How was his perspective on the experience different?

2 If someone asked you to describe the most important moments of your life, what would you tell them and why?

3 Identify one place you experience God’s presence in your daily routine.

## JOURNEYING WITH JESUS

The Bible tells a story about some people who had a transformative experience with God during an ordinary commute. Jesus had been teaching large crowds all day by the Sea of Galilee. The next morning, on the other side of the lake, Jesus and His disciples were accosted by a man tormented by a host of demons. The demoniac was hopelessly in bondage until Jesus set him free. Jesus would commission the former demoniac to be the first missionary to the Greek cities of Decapolis. Between these two significant ministry events lay an “ordinary” journey across the Sea of Galilee.

#### 4 Read the Scripture passage in the margin.

The disciples set sail that evening believing they were on a routine trip. Several of them had grown up sailing on that lake and knew it well. Yet sandwiched between two powerful moments of ministry, during a seemingly mundane commute, the disciples experienced Jesus in a spectacular new way.

The sudden onslaught of a fierce storm exposed the disciples' lack of faith. The wind blew violently, sending large waves crashing over the vulnerable vessel. The terrified disciples hastily awakened Jesus and told Him they were about to die. Jesus arose and rebuked the wind and the waves, and they instantly became perfectly calm. Then, Jesus asked His disciples why they had been afraid. The word for *fear* that Jesus used of the disciples in the storm is weaker than the word used to describe the disciples' awe of Jesus after watching Him calm the tempest. They asked each other, "*Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey Him!*" (Mark 4:41b). The disciples had previously witnessed Jesus healing, teaching, and casting out evil spirits. But on that stormy night, they experienced Jesus in an unprecedented manner. The disciples learned that when you go with Jesus, He can transform ordinary moments into something extraordinary.

Most of our time is spent in the daily "commuting" between what we consider to be the important events in our life. We are focused on a specific destination and may assume nothing of significance will happen on our way there. Yet God is present in every moment—we only need eyes to see.

#### 5 Describe a time when you experienced God in an ordinary moment.

#### 6 Do you expect encounters with God to be normal? What does your answer reveal about your faith?

#### 7 How might you be missing God's activity around you?

Do you recognize opportunities to experience God during the routines of your daily life? In this unit, we'll explore **Reality 1: God Draws You into His Eternal Purposes**. God is inviting you on a journey to experience Him as you join in His purposes around you. When you open your eyes to God's activity, even the mundane moments of your life provide surprising opportunities to experience the eternal purposes of God.

On the next page, you'll find help developing **spiritual rhythms to increase your spiritual awareness**. **Pick one to practice this week.**

On that day, when evening had come, he told them, "Let's cross over to the other side of the sea." So they left the crowd and took him along since he was in the boat. And other boats were with him. A great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking over the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. He was in the stern, sleeping on the cushion. So they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher! Don't you care that we're going to die?" He got up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Silence! Be still!" The wind ceased, and there was a great calm. Then he said to them, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?" And they were terrified and asked one another, "Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!"

**Mark 4:35-41**

**Commit to memorizing  
Philippians 2:13.**

For it is God who is working in you both to will and to work according to his good purpose.

**Use the card included in  
the back of the book.**

# Weekly Rhythm

*Let us also keep in step  
with the Spirit.*

**GALATIANS 5:25**

## *Developing a Rhythm of* SPIRITUAL AWARENESS

God is at work all around you. The rhythms of your life—the patterns and tendencies that direct your actions and focus your attention—can become misaligned with God and His purposes. However, over the course of this study, we will guide you to intentionally develop rhythms that focus your everyday living toward God.

### HOW TO

The best way to develop a new rhythm is to implement healthy daily habits that reinforce it. Each week, we will provide a list of suggested habits. These are not more activities to clutter up your busy life. These are strategic actions to cultivate new rhythms in your life and lead you down the path to spiritual maturity. If done right, the rhythms will bring more freedom to your life, not less. Consistency is key.

These habits are not ends in themselves but are designed to help you develop a long-lasting rhythm. Over time, you may wish to try a new practice or add additional habits from this list once the first one becomes second nature. You are also welcome to brainstorm additional options that suit your personality and needs.

### RHYTHM OF THE WEEK

This week, let's start developing a rhythm of spiritual awareness. How aware are you of God's presence throughout your daily routines? God is at work all around you. If you aren't noticing His activity, you may be more attuned to the distractions of the world than to God. Allow the habits on the next page to begin pointing your spiritual eyes back toward God's presence and activity around you.

- Prayerfully choose one or more habits from the short-term habits.
- Scan the QR code on the next page to print your habit cards. Place these cards in strategic places to remind you. Feel free to also use alarms or other methods to keep you accountable.
- Use the rhythm reflections at the end of the week to develop an intentional plan and track your progress.

# Short-Term Habits

DAILY/WEEKLY

---

## 1. GRATITUDE

If you already have a routine of brewing coffee or making breakfast each morning, commit that time to thanking God for His goodness and remembering the ways He has blessed you. This is a great way to begin each day, but it can be done at other times as well. Perhaps you can put your habit card by the coffee maker so you remember each morning.

---

## 2. SEEING

Place a reminder on your door to take notice of what God is doing around you. Every time you leave, ask God to reveal His activity to you. Every time you return back home, take a moment to reflect on one way you saw God at work that day.

---

## 3. LISTENING

If you commute to work, commit one or more days a week as a “silent” drive (no music, podcasts, or audiobooks). Instead, use that time to prepare your heart to recognize God’s presence throughout the day ahead.

---

## 4. BLESSING/ENCOURAGING

As you enter each day, pray and ask God to bring someone to your attention. Seek to give a word of encouragement to that individual when they come to mind, or to at least one person throughout the day. You can do this in person or electronically. You might be surprised how often you will hear the feedback, “Your encouragement came at the perfect time . . .”

---

## 5. REFLECTING

Start a spiritual journal. Commit to writing down at least one thing you saw God do each day before the day ends. You might consider keeping a journal on your pillow or nightstand as a reminder.



Scan the QR code to download printable habit cards. Use these cards as visible reminders of your chosen habit.

# DAY 2

## GOD'S PURPOSES

*Spiritual maturity is the desire to align your will with God's purposes.*

For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; and those he called, he also justified; and those he justified, he also glorified.

**Romans 8:29-30**

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.

**Ephesians 2:10**

For this reason God highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow—in heaven and on earth and under the earth—and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

**Philippians 2:9-11**

God's will is **that which He desires, decrees, or intends to happen**. God's will is not arbitrary; it derives from His holy and loving character and serves to bring about His purposes for the world He created. The apostle Paul said, *For it is God who is working in you both to will and to work according to his good purpose* (Phil. 2:13). God invites you to join Him as He works in and around your life to accomplish His purposes.

Scripture affirms that a mark of spiritual maturity is the desire to align your will with God's purposes. The author of Hebrews wrote, *Now may the God of peace, who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus—the great Shepherd of the sheep—through the blood of the everlasting covenant, equip you with everything good to do his will, working in us what is pleasing in his sight* (Heb. 13:20-21). Jesus taught His disciples to pray like this: *“Our Father in heaven, your name be honored as holy. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”* (Matt. 6:9-10).

- 1 God's will and purposes are expressed in Scripture. Read the passages in the margin and identify God's purposes.

Romans 8:29-30

Ephesians 2:10

Philippians 2:9-11

God desires every believer to have the same character qualities as His Son Jesus (Rom. 8:29-30). He has good works He has prepared for us to accomplish (Eph. 2:10). God also intends for every person to one day acknowledge Christ as Lord (Rom. 14:11; Phil. 2:10-11; 2 Pet. 3:9). God is at work each day, drawing people into His eternal purposes on earth (John 5:17).

Do you see God at work around you? Do you recognize God's purposes for your family, co-workers, church, or the people you encounter each day at the gym or grocery store? God's purposes are not just for individuals but for communities as well. As God gathers His people into churches, He invites and commissions these communities of believers to be on mission with Him.

True flourishing comes when you align your life with God. We often become preoccupied with accomplishing our own goals rather than discovering how God wants to achieve His purposes in and through us. This lifelong pursuit is a journey that will lead you to spiritual maturity. The greatest example of this was Jesus Himself who, when facing crucifixion, prayed, *“Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me—nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done”* (Luke 22:42).

## GOD IS AT WORK ALL AROUND YOU

God is constantly present and working, but we don't always recognize His presence or activity. We may expect to encounter God at a church service, or during a midweek Bible study, or at a Christian conference, but we are often spiritually unaware of what is happening in between those moments. As you go about your routines, how aware are you of God's presence? How actively are you pursuing His purposes?

- 2 In what areas of your life is it easiest to recognize God's presence and activity? Why?

In what areas of your life is it hardest to recognize God's presence and activity? Why?

### *Rhythm Reminders*

Which of this week's habits will help you recognize God's work around you?

## "MISSION MAP"

- 3 Let the image below represent your home. In the space around the house, add other locations where you spend time each week (e.g., school, work, coffee shops, parks, gym, grocery store). Think of this as your current "Mission Map." God is present and working out His purposes in each of these places.

Beside each location, list what you have seen God do there in the past. Then, list what you sense God might be doing there now. Use the margin if you need more space.



## REGULAR ROUTINES

Just as there are places we regularly go, we also have activities that regularly consume our time.

- 4 Identify activities you do regularly (cooking, commuting to work, washing laundry, dropping kids off at school, hobbies).

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

### *Rhythm Reminders*

Think about your existing routines. Where could you easily integrate a new spiritual habit?

We may be tempted to view our daily routine and responsibilities as having little spiritual significance, but so much of our time is spent doing them!

- 5 List three ways God may want to bring about His purposes through your regular routines.

1.

2.

3.

## OUR PROBLEM

We are naturally disoriented to God. He has told us, “*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not my ways.*” This is the LORD’s declaration. “*For as heaven is higher than earth, so my ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts*” (Is. 55:8-9).<sup>1</sup> We are so consumed with our own goals and desires that we often fail to see, understand, and pursue God’s.

1. For more on this topic, see: Richard Blackaby. *The Ways of God: How God Reveals Himself Before a Watching World* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2023).

There are at least four reasons for this:

1. **We are self-centered rather than God-centered.** We view life from our perspective rather than from God's. Jesus said that in order to follow Him, we must deny ourselves (Matt. 16:24).
2. **We have a temporal rather than an eternal perspective.** We prioritize personal, short-term gains and fail to consider the larger scope of God's purposes. God sees the whole picture (Is. 46:10).
3. **We focus on the flesh rather than on the Spirit.** We seek to fulfill the needs of our physical bodies but often neglect our souls. If we do not cultivate our spiritual senses, we will not recognize the Holy Spirit's activity around us (Mark 8:18).
4. **We are characterized by sin rather than righteousness.** Sin separates us from God and blinds us to His activity. Jesus said the *pure in heart* would see God (Matt. 5:8).

## GOD'S PURPOSES FOR YOUR LIFE

God's purpose for your life is for you to join His activity as He accomplishes His will in the world around you. Do you know what His purposes are? Consider what God's purposes are for:

1. **Your passions:** the hobbies and interests you spend your time, money, and effort on
2. **Your family:** spouse, children, parents, siblings, etc.
3. **Your work or school:** your skills, colleagues, customers
4. **Your church:** where God has placed you alongside other believers in your community

God is continually working to fulfill His purposes. Instead of asking God to join you to help accomplish your plans, you must align yourself with what He is doing. As you do, God will lead you toward spiritual flourishing and maturity.

### SUMMARY

- God's will includes good works He intends for you to do.
- God is steadily working out His purposes in the world.
- If you are disoriented to God, you won't recognize His purposes or activity.
- God is present and active in your regular routines.

1. What truth or statement stood out to you in today's material?

2. How should you adjust your life to God's truth today?

3. What is one question you have about today's material?

RESPONSE

*God, thank You for continually working in my life. Lead me to focus on You instead of myself. Help me to realize my part in Your eternal purposes. Allow me to see where You are at work and join you in that work. Please use this study to mature me and transform me more into the likeness of Your Son, Jesus. Amen.*

PRAYER

# DAY 3

## SPIRITUAL MATURITY

*Spiritual maturity is reflecting the characteristics of Christ, seeing things from God's perspective, and responding in obedience as He leads. This pattern defined Jesus's life.*

Children naturally act immature. Despite their many endearing qualities and innocence, they can also be selfish, short-sighted, and naive. We all begin at this place. However, if an individual continues to behave that way, something is wrong. The same is true for our spiritual life. If a Christian never grows out of spiritual infancy, we should be concerned.

God's purpose is for every Christian to mature in their faith. The writer of Hebrews charged: *Therefore, let us leave the elementary teaching about Christ and go on to maturity* (Heb. 6:1a). As new Christians, we begin with a rudimentary understanding and faith, but we should continue to grow deeper and stronger in our walk with God over time. The Bible speaks about moving beyond spiritual *milk* to *solid food* (1 Cor. 3:1-2; Heb. 5:12-14). Paul says, *When I became a man, I put aside childish things* (1 Cor. 13:11b).

1 Define "spiritual maturity" in your own words.

2 Who do you know that you consider spiritually mature?  
What are they like?

3 How would you honestly rate your current spiritual maturity?  
(Circle a number below.) Why did you choose that number?

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

At the beginning of this unit, you read Mark 4:35-41. The disciples were sailing across the sea when a storm arose. They panicked and jumped to false conclusions, asking Jesus, "*Don't you care that we are going to die?*" (v. 38). After Jesus calmed the storm, He asked His disciples, "*Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?*" (v. 40). They were spiritually immature. They did not view their situation as Jesus did, even though they had spent time with Him and heard His teachings.

Spiritual maturity is reflecting the characteristics of Christ, seeing things from God's perspective, and responding in obedience as He leads. This pattern defined Jesus's life. He declared: "*Truly I tell you, the Son is not able to do anything on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, the Son likewise does these things*" (John 5:19).

On another occasion, Jesus rebuked Peter saying, “*Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me because you’re not thinking about God’s concerns but human concerns*” (Matt. 16:23). Just a few verses earlier, Peter had made one of the greatest theological statements in history, declaring, “*You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God*” (Matt. 16:16). But now, he was demonstrating that he did not see things from God’s perspective or know how to translate his theological insight into proper action. Rather than reflecting the character of his Lord, he was a “hindrance” to Jesus. Peter was supposed to be a foundational “rock” for the church (Matt. 16:18), but Jesus referred to him here as a hazard to fulfilling God’s purposes.

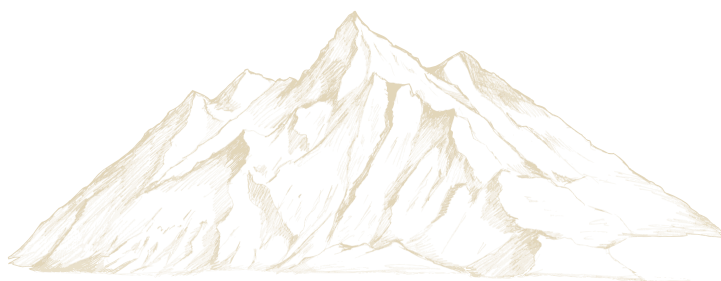
## GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITIES

Maturity will open new doors of opportunity for you. On the other hand, spiritual immaturity keeps doors closed. Only six days after the event described above, several of the disciples failed to cast a demon out of a tormented child. Why? Jesus said, “*Because of your little faith*” (Matt. 17:20). Their lack of faith caused them to miss out on God’s purposes to set the boy free. Jesus healed the boy, but the disciples were passive observers instead of active participants in God’s activity.

Peter, James, and John had recently experienced a breathtaking divine encounter on a mountaintop when Jesus was transfigured before their eyes (Matt. 17:1-13). This was a classic “mountaintop experience.” But God’s work is not primarily accomplished on mountain peaks but on the slopes and in the valleys. We may be tempted to continually seek “spiritual highs,” but mature Christians know how to experience God at the base of the mountain, not just the summit.

**4** In the margin, list the most impactful “mountaintop experiences” of your life. Then, list divine encounters you’ve experienced in daily life. Is it easier for you to recognize God on the mountaintops or in the valleys?

Mountaintop Experiences:



Experiences in Daily Life:

## GOD’S PRESENCE IN THE VALLEY

Mountaintop experiences are unusual, often spectacular or exhilarating experiences with God. Mountaintop experiences can be life-changing, but the Bible demonstrates that people often struggle to transition from the mountaintop back into ordinary life. Elijah feared for his life and retreated after his amazing showdown on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 19:1-4); Moses smashed the Ten Commandments in anger after descending Mount Horeb (Ex. 32:19); Peter was silenced and corrected mid-sentence by the audible voice of God while still on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:5-6).

## Rhythm Reminders

What did you learn about God and yourself during a “mountaintop experience” that you could implement into your daily routines this week?

Many Christians constantly seek new heights to reignite their faith. Like any other high, spiritual highs can be addictive. The truth is that God is just as active in the valley as He is on the mountaintop. Spiritual maturity is a process that generally takes place in the valleys between mountaintop experiences.

- 5 Think of a spiritual “high” in your life. What did your faith look like after you transitioned off that “mountaintop” to the “valley” of regular life?

After your mountaintop experience, was it difficult to stay inspired or motivated? Why?

### SUMMARY

- God wants us to grow in our spiritual maturity.
- Spiritual maturity is reflecting the character of Christ, seeing things from God’s perspective, and responding to His leading in obedience.
- Most of life is lived in “valleys,” not “peaks.”
- Spiritual “mountaintops” are important, but our faith must come with us down the mountain into everyday life.

The point of a “mountaintop” experience is not to remain there forever. It provides an occasional reprieve from the ordinary routine to give a broader perspective so we can return to the valley and implement that truth into our daily lives. God is as present and active in the valleys as He is on the mountaintops. As King David knew, God is present and active even in the valley of the shadow of death (Ps. 23:4). On the journey to spiritual maturity, we do not leap from peak to peak. Rather, we traverse through the terrain in between. We may have our eyes opened on the mountaintop, but God wants that truth to be applied each step we take down the mountain. We receive revelation on the mountain, but practice those truths in the valley.

Don’t wait for the next spiritual high. God is drawing you into His eternal purposes now, right where you are. You may have encountered God in profound ways on the mountaintop, but the next step in your journey is for you to learn to experience Him daily in the valley.

### RESPONSE

1. What truth or statement stood out to you in today’s material?

2. How should you adjust your life to God’s truth today?

3. What is one question you have about today’s material?

### PRAYER

*God, thank You that You are with me on the mountaintops as well as the valleys. Help me to see things from Your perspective. Reveal to me where You are at work so I can follow You in obedience. Please continue to shape me on my life’s journey so I mature in my faith. Show me one area in my life that needs to mature this week. Amen.*

# SMALL STEPS ADD UP

## DAY 4

When you think about God drawing you into His eternal purposes, you may imagine more obvious activities like an international mission trip, serving at your church, or volunteering at a local charity. Yet often what God invites you to do is take the next small step of obedience.

- 1 List some large tasks God has led you to undertake in the past.

List some small tasks God has led you to do in the past.

Which of these lists was easier to come up with? If you filled out the lists further, which would be longer?

*We do not become spiritually mature overnight. We do it one step at a time.*

## STEP-BY-STEP

One of Daniel's major undertakings was running a marathon. He had run dozens of 3.1-mile (5K) races, but the challenge of running twenty-three more miles than he had ever run before seemed impossible until, he discovered a secret that dramatically changed his perspective: He wasn't required to add twenty-three more miles. According to a four-month training plan, he only needed to add one mile each week. An additional twenty-three miles all at once was impossible, but one mile was achievable. Suddenly, the challenge wasn't so daunting.

Week by week, mile by mile, step by step, Daniel woke up early, laced up his shoes, and trained, increasing the distance by modest lengths. Eventually, the race day arrived. The next hours were challenging, but when he crossed the finish line, he had accomplished what once seemed impossible. The race may have lasted only four hours, but the process of being shaped into the kind of person who could run a marathon occurred over many months.

We can read about Moses, or Mary, or Paul, or Jesus and feel as if reaching their level of spiritual maturity is far beyond our grasp. But we do not become spiritually mature overnight. We do it one step at a time. Large assignments from God can be life-changing, but consistency in smaller assignments adds up over time to make a big difference.

### *Rhythm Reminders*

What is one spiritual habit you've consistently practiced? How has it led to your growth?

## JOURNEY BEFORE DESTINATION

Jesus said, “*Therefore don’t worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own*” (Matt. 6:34). Don’t become so preoccupied with your future destination that you forget about today’s journey.

Most of life is spent in transit. Jesus told His disciples, “*Follow me [ . . . ] and I will make you fish for people*” (Matt. 4:19). He pointed them toward an exciting destination (being “fishers of people”), but the invitation was to *follow* Him daily. Along the way, Christ would *make* them into the people He called them to be. What they became was the byproduct of their obedience. Leaving their fishing boats was the start of the journey, but it was the day-by-day process of *following* that shaped them.

Biblical authors frequently use the metaphor of running a race to illustrate the Christian life.

Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every hindrance and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, keeping our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. For the joy that lay before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

For consider him who endured such hostility from sinners against himself, so that you won’t grow weary and give up.

**Hebrews 12:1-3**

← **2** Read the passage in the margin. Circle the words pointing to the “destination,” and underline words that represent the “journey.”

Identify a sin that may be entangling you during your race:

Identify a distraction that may be hindering your race:

Are you a long-term planner/thinker, or do you tend to “live in the moment” and not look far into the future? How might this affect the way you run your race, positively and/or negatively?

## AN EXCITING JOURNEY

All of us at times can become discouraged by the daily routines of life and long for something more exciting. Yet Paul says, *We walk by faith, not by sight* (2 Cor. 5:7). You don’t always know where God is leading you or what lies ahead. Therefore, you must focus on the next step of faith in front of you.

Many who have set out on the journey toward spiritual maturity have failed to *calculate the cost* (Luke 14:28). As a result, they gave up along the way. We’ve known teenagers who came back from a Christian summer camp “on

fire for God,” ready to evangelize their entire high school, but a few months later, they were once again caught up in the busyness of life and rarely shared Jesus with their classmates. We’ve known seminary students, pastors, and Bible college professors who no longer claim to even be Christians. Many of them could point to positive “mountaintop” experiences along the way, but they often lost sight of God in the “valleys.” A faith built on mountaintop experiences is always in danger of stagnation during prolonged times spent in the valley of ordinary life.

We have also known ordinary men and women who steadily grew in their love for God over decades as they regularly experienced new aspects of God’s character, making the most mundane daily activities invigorating. They cultivated a relationship with God over time. They didn’t just pray so God would grant their requests. For them, conversation with God was the point. Closeness with God, like in any relationship, is developed intentionally and gradually.

If you live each day in faithful expectancy, experiencing God and aligning your life with His purposes, then you will be exactly where God wants you to be in the future. More importantly, you will be who God wants you to be. Strive to live each day in such a way that you can echo the words of Paul: *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith* (2 Tim. 4:7).

**3** What is one small step toward spiritual maturity you could take today (invite a neighbor over to get to know them, begin praying for an unbelieving friend, begin a new Bible study)?

**SUMMARY**

- The journey, not the destination, is where much of our spiritual growth takes place.
- Experiencing God in our daily routines is how we “run the race” toward spiritual maturity.
- God is in the ordinary moments, not just the big ones.
- Small steps of faith add up over time to make a big difference.

1. What truth or statement stood out to you in today’s material?	2. How should you adjust your life to God’s truth today?	3. What is one question you have about today’s material?	<b>RESPONSE</b>
--	--	--	-----------------

*Lord, thank You for being with me each step I take as I walk by faith. Help me to be as excited about following You through a normal day as I am when I undertake something unusual. Help me not to live only for the exciting moments of life, but to learn that every moment spent walking with You is time to be cherished. Amen.*

**PRAYER**

# DAY 5

## RHYTHM REFLECTIONS

Where are you seeing God's purposes in your life?

What are you reading in the Bible?

What are you praying for? What prayers has God answered?

Which short-term habit did you try this week? Reflect on your experience.

What is one area in which you hope to grow over the course of this study?

## VERSE TO MEMORIZE

For it is God who is working in you both to will  
and to work according to his good purpose.

**PHILIPPIANS 2:13**

# REALITY 1

## GROUP EXPERIENCE

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### LOOK BACK

*Use these questions to discuss your individual study from this unit.*

1. What is one thing you're looking forward to in this study?
2. From day two, where is it easiest and hardest to see God at work?
3. From day three, how did you define "spiritual maturity"?

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### LEAN IN TOGETHER

*Use these questions to discuss the video teaching.*

4. Reality 1 is *God draws you into His eternal purposes*. How would you define God's eternal purposes?
5. Have you ever had a spiritual "mountaintop experience"? If so, what was it, and how did it shape your faith?
6. Who is someone you would describe as spiritually mature? What have you learned from this person?
7. How did this session help you reframe what it means to be spiritually mature?
8. Where do you feel like God is drawing you to His work?
9. The disciples encountered Jesus on a boat ride from one side of a lake to another. When have you encountered Jesus in an "ordinary moment"?

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### LOOK FORWARD

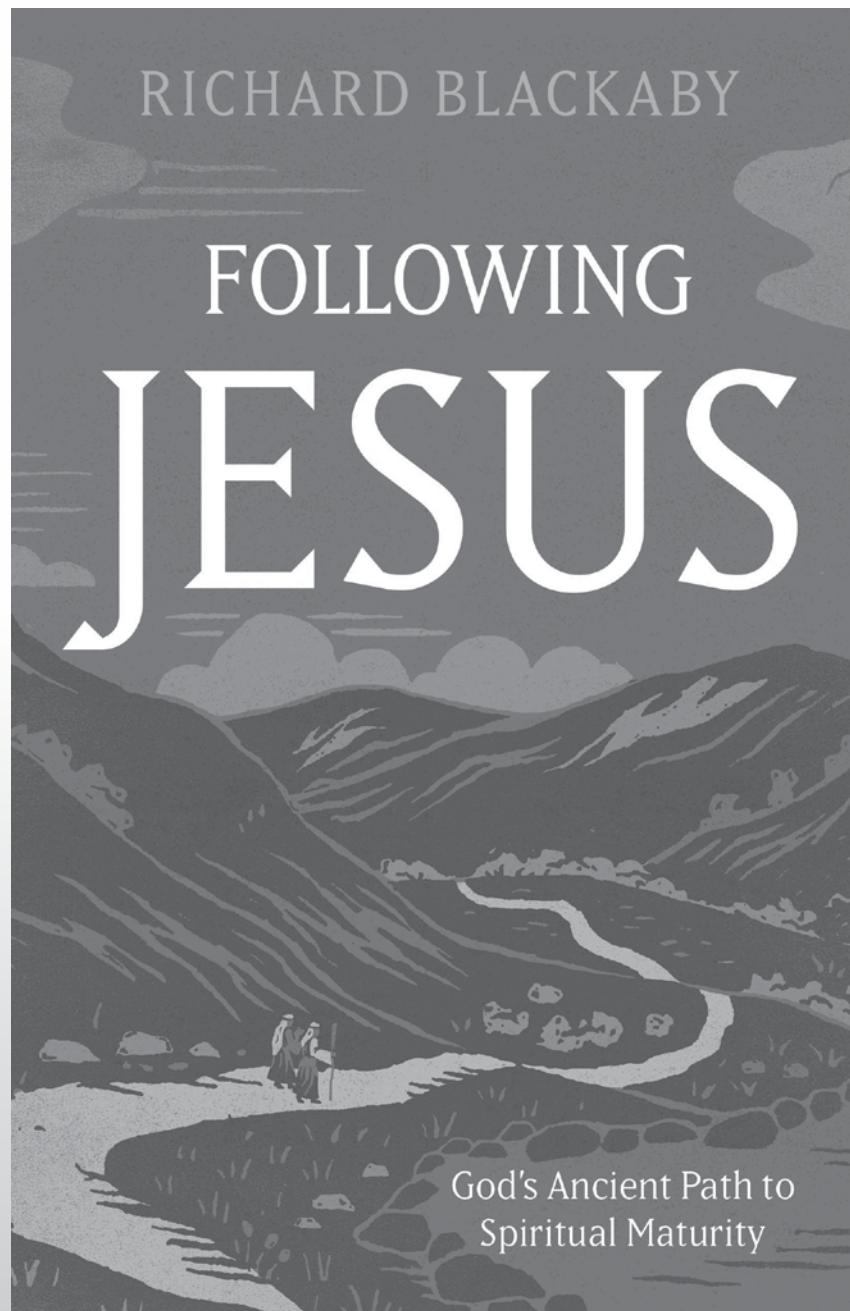
*Use these questions to discuss the spiritual habits you are forming.*

10. Share about the spiritual rhythms you've developed in your walk with God. Which have been most helpful?
11. Which short-term habit did you try this week? How do you expect it to contribute to your spiritual growth?



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## FROM THE MOUNTAINTOP TO THE DAY-TO-DAY

Many of us meet God in a mountaintop moment—a powerful experience with the living God—but then don't know how to move forward from that place. The reality is, our Christian lives are not lived on the mountaintop but on a daily journey of learning to experience God and follow Jesus, taking part in God's story as He pursues His eternal purposes in our world. Some days may require major leaps of faith, but more often, we'll take small steps of faithfulness in the ordinary moments of our lives. This study will help you experience God not just on the mountaintops but in all the places in between.

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