

LAUNCH

A JOURNEY TO FOLLOWING JESUS



for God.
for people.
for the city.
for the world.



WELCOME TO LAUNCH

You've taken the first step—you signed up and made it to LAUNCH, and we are so glad you are here! The next 4 weeks are going to be a journey like no other, and one that we believe will challenge, grow, and shape your life forever.

LAUNCH is designed to take place in a group setting so you'll have the opportunity to be in discussion and community with others who are eager to learn and grow. We will cover some challenging topics as we learn more about what it means to build your life on the foundation of Jesus. Throughout the next 4 weeks, we will journey through Scripture together and through that begin to discover the character and the person of God.

So whether you have already put your faith in Jesus or you are still exploring what it means to follow Jesus, get ready—the next 4 weeks are going to be extraordinary.

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SCRIPTURE JOURNEY

Throughout LAUNCH we will read the Scripture together.
Each day you will walk through this process:

- S - What does the Scripture say?**
- O - What do you Observe? What stands out?**
- A - How does this Apply to your life?**
- P - Pray about this Scripture.**

These questions will help you better understand and process the Scripture you are reading. As you read, let one verse rise to the top — this will be your main takeaway and observation for that day.



JESUS

WHO IS JESUS?

Jesus is the central figure in history and civilization.

- Most calendars hinge on the birth and death of Jesus Christ.
- Great masterpieces depict the birth, life, resurrection and second coming of Jesus.

Jesus is historical reality.

Jesus actually lived on planet Earth. He was human like you and me:

- He had a physical birth. [Luke 2:7]
- He was in a family. [Matthew 13:56]
- He grew up. [Luke 2:52]
- He was hungry. [Matthew 4:2]
- He was tired. [John 4:6]
- He experienced grief. [John 11:36]

Historians of the day recorded their accounts of the life of Jesus:

Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was the Christ, and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians so named from him are not extinct at this day. (Josephus, AD 90 - Antiquities of the Jews 18.3.3)

Jesus is divine.

He claimed to be more than a man. He said: *I am*

- The bread of life. [John 6:35]
- The light of the world. [John 8:12]
- The resurrection and the life. [John 11:25-26]
- The way, the truth and the life. [John 14:6]
- The christ of God. [Mark 14:61]
- One with the Father. [John 10:30]
- God the son. [John 8:58]

The New Testament says about Jesus:

- Jesus is the eternal Word of God, and Jesus was the creator of everything. [John 1]
- Jesus is the image of the invisible God. [Colossians 1:15]
- Jesus is the One who holds everything together. [Colossians 1:16]

We must decide who Jesus is to us:

“Let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us.”
– CS Lewis, Mere Christianity

WHY DID JESUS COME?

1. Sin brings death into our lives.

- Sin: *When we knowingly or unknowingly choose something less than God's best.*
- Sin doesn't make us bad people.
Sin makes us dead people.

“For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.” [Matthew 5:20]

“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins.” [Ephesians 2:1]

“For the wages of sin is death...” [Romans 6:23]

What does this mean for us?

1. No one is perfect.
2. We are separated from God.
3. Sin doesn't make us bad, it makes us dead.
4. You cannot make yourself alive on your own.
5. We need God's help to come to life.

2. Jesus brings life.

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ....” [Ephesians 2:4-5 ESV]

“...but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” [Romans 6:23 ESV]

“Whoever has the Son has life...” [1 John 5:12]

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” [John 3:16]

This is the gospel:

Not that sin makes us bad, but sin made us dead. And that Christ gave his life in death in our place, so that through Christ, we can be brought to LIFE.

WHY SHOULD I BELIEVE IN JESUS?

Jesus is real in our lives today .

- He has changed the lives of many people throughout history..
- He is changing the lives of people around us today.

Jesus is reasonable .

If Jesus is the creator of the universe, then he's the greatest scientist who ever lived.

- Faith makes sense.
- Great thinkers have been followers of Jesus.

"You must picture me alone in that room at Magdalen, night after night, feeling, whenever my mind lifted even for a second from my work, the steady, unrelenting approach of Him whom I so earnestly desired not to meet. That which I greatly feared had at last come upon me. In the Trinity Term of 1929 I gave in, and admitted that God was God, and knelt and prayed: perhaps, that night, the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England." — CS Lewis, *Surprised By Joy*

Jesus is reliable.

Jesus fulfilled over 400 Old Testament prophecies (promises).
For 8 prophecies to be fulfilled, it would be the odds of 1 in 10^{17} .

- Messiah born in Bethlehem. [Micah 5:2 & Matthew 2:1-6]
- John the Baptist would prepare the way. [Malachi 3:1 & Mark 1:1-3]
- Jesus would ride on a donkey. [Zechariah 9:9 & John 12:12-15]
- Jesus would be sold for 30 pieces of silver, and the money would be used to buy a potter's field. [Zechariah 11:13 & Matthew 27:3-10]
- Jesus would make no defense during his trial. [Isaiah 53:7 & Mark 14:61]
- Jesus would be crucified and his robe would be divided. [Psalm 22:16-18 & Matthew 27:35]

Jesus opens our eyes and reveals who He is to us.

- Jesus moves from information to someone you see as the Son of God.
- Though Jesus is divine, He wants a relationship with me.



SCRIPTURE JOURNEY

WEEK ONE

DAY 1 // Read John 1:1-28

DAY 2 // Read John 1:29-51

DAY 3 // Read John 2:1-25

DAY 4 // Read John 3:1-21

DAY 5 // Read John 3:22-36

DAY 6 // Rest + Remember



SCRIPTURE

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

The Bible is a collection of books that tells one story: God's Story.

- A collection of 66 books.
- The word Bible means library.
- Two sections: Old and New Testament.
- 40 different authors.
- Three languages.
- 1,600 years of history.
- One story: *The story of God bringing you and me back into a relationship with Himself.*

The Bible is the most reliable piece of literature in existence.

- **Manuscript Evidence:** Ancient literature was recorded in manuscripts. The amount available determined the veracity of the manuscripts.
 - Caesar’s Gallic War: 10 copies
 - New Testament: 5,000+ Greek, 10,000+ Latin, and more
- **Proximity of Writing:** The shorter the timespan between the original writing and the earliest copy available, the more reliable the manuscript.
 - Caesar’s Gallic War (58-50 B.C.): Earliest copy A.D. 900 = 950yrs lapse
 - Gospel of John (A.D. 40-100): Earliest copy A.D. 130 = 50yrs lapse

Accuracy of Writing:

- Archeology reveals the accuracy of Scriptures.
- As history unfolds, the Bible becomes more true.

The Bible is the living and active Word of God [Hebrews 4:12].

- Written by ordinary men.
- Breathed out by the Spirit of God. [2 Timothy 3:16].

Manuscript Evidence: If the average manuscript is 2.5in thick, the copies of the average 1st Cent. Greek writer would stack up to 4ft high, while the copies of the New Testament would stack up to over a mile high.

Proximity of Writing: Caesar’s Gallic War: written 58-50 B.C. Earliest copy A.D. 900 = 950yrs lapse. NT: written between A.D. 40-100, earliest copy A.D. 130 = less than 50yrs lapse.

WHY SHOULD WE READ THE BIBLE?

1. In the Bible, we discover the character and person of God.

- Not just a book of wisdom, principles, laws or statements.
- We learn who God is in the pages of Scripture.

2. In the Bible, we are reminded of the story of God.

- God is working in the world to restore humanity to Himself.
- God is bringing great glory to Himself.

3. The Bible reminds us of our place in God's story.

- God's story answers the most important questions of life.
- God has a place for you and for me in the story.

4. The Bible has the power to change our lives.

- We don't read just for information.
- We read because it has the power to change who we are. [Psalm 19:7-11]
- Hold fast to the word of life [Philippians 2:16]

**7 The law of the Lord is perfect,
reviving the soul.**

**The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy,
making wise the simple.**

**8 The precepts of the Lord are right,
giving joy to the heart.**

**The commands of the Lord are radiant,
giving light to the eyes.**

**9 The fear of the Lord is pure,
enduring forever.**

**The ordinances of the Lord are sure,
and all together righteous.**

**10 They are more precious than gold,
than much pure gold;**

they are sweeter than honey,
than honey from the honeycomb.

**11 By them is your servant warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.**

– Psalm 19: 7-11

HOW DO WE READ THE BIBLE?

1. We approach it as the living, breathing Word of God.

- God-breathed [2 Timothy 3:16]
- Living and active [Hebrews 4:12]
- Eternal [Matthew 24:35]

2. We remember the Bible is one great story.

- One story throughout the Bible.
- Each book points towards the story.

3. We ask 3 questions:

- What does it say ?
 - What does it mean ?
 - How does God want me to apply this Scripture to my life?
-

4. We read the Word in community .

- The first believers collectively leaned in to God’s Word. [Acts 2:42]
- We teach and admonish each other with the Word. [Colossians 3:16]

5. We read by understanding that the Word of God is actually reading us .

- The Word is always above our lives
- The Word makes us into the people that God wants us to be

“In every block of marble I see a statue as plain as though it stood before me, shaped and perfect in attitude and action. I have only to hew away the rough walls that imprison the lovely apparition to reveal it to the other eyes as mine see it.”

– Michelangelo



SCRIPTURE JOURNEY

WEEK TWO

DAY 7 // Read John 4:1-26

DAY 8 // Read John 4:27-54

DAY 9 // Read John 5:1-15

DAY 10 // Read John 5:16-47

DAY 11 // Read John 6:1-24

DAY 12 // Rest + Remember

PRAYER

WHAT IS PRAYER?

Prayer is constant awareness of God.

- Knowing that God is near.
- Knowing that God wants to have a relationship with us.

Prayer is not just about religion.

- Not out of obligation.
- Not about a ritual.
- We pray more because we want a relationship more.

Prayer is an attitude of your heart.

- God wants to know you.
- God wants you to know Him.
- Not just a one way relationship.

“Come near to God, and He will come near to you...”

- James 4:8

WHAT DID JESUS TEACH US ABOUT PRAYER?

Jesus' life was marked by prayer :

He teaches us that prayer is the way we stay connected to our Heavenly Father and understand His purposes and plans for us.

“This, then, is how you should pray:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
one earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.”
[Matthew 6:9-13 ESV]

Three important things to know before praying [Matthew 6:5-7]:

- We start by praying alone
- We do not need a big quota of words
- We do not pray to impress others

“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”

[Matthew 6:5-7]

Seven lessons from The Lord’s Prayer [Matthew 6:9-13]:

The Lord’s Prayer serves as a model prayer that teaches us how to pray.

1. We worship God.
2. We identify ourselves as His .
3. We realign ourselves with the big picture .
4. We re-engage in His ultimate mission .
5. We resize our needs to a manageable portion .
6. We re-center ourselves on the cross .
7. We are led by God into eternity .

HOW DO WE PRAY?

What does prayer look for us tomorrow?

- We can pray at all times.
- We can pray about all things.
- We can pray in all places.

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

[1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 ESV]

The 4 major components of our prayers:

1. Worship : We praise God.
2. Confession : We keep a short account with God.
3. Thanksgiving: We come back and give thanks.
4. Intercession: We pray for people.



SCRIPTURE JOURNEY

WEEK THREE

DAY 13 // Read John 6:25-71

DAY 14 // Read John 7:1-24

DAY 15 // Read John 7:25-53

DAY 16 // Read John 8:1-20

DAY 17 // Read John 8:21-59

DAY 18 // Rest + Remember





IF GOD IS SO GOOD THEN WHY IS LIFE SO HARD?

IF GOD IS SO GOOD THEN WHY IS LIFE SO HARD? >>>

Life is hard because we live in a broken world.

- It is not a reflection on God.
- It is a reflection on me.
- Our disobedience severed our relationship with God.
- Life is hard because sin has entered into the world.

In the broken world we have a sovereign God.

- God's Sovereignty: God has a specific plan for history and for our lives that cannot be thwarted.
 - He is still working for His glory and for our good.
 - Jesus walked through this broken world.
 - Jesus' life was broken for our sin so that we could have a relationship with God.
 - Jesus can relate to what we are going through.
-

We live in a broken world but we follow a sovereign God.

- God worked in the broken world, through the broken body of His Son, to make a way for us to have our sins forgiven and to know that we will have His power in this broken world.
- We will have a future and a home with him forever in a place where there is no brokenness.

“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting men’s sins against them.” [2 Corinthians 5:18-19]

- The brokenness of the world and the sovereignty of God are most clearly seen in the cross.

HOW DO WE RESPOND TO COMMON HURDLES OF THE FAITH?

1. If God is good, why is there so much evil in the world?
- We opened the door to death with our sin. [Romans 5:12]
 - God closed that door through the work of Jesus Christ. [Romans 4:25]

2. I don't feel like I need God.
- At some point in life, everybody needs God.
 - We can start by sharing our story.
"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy;
I have come that they may have life and have it to the full."
[John 10:10]

3. I'm going to have to give up too much to follow Jesus.
- God isn't a taker. He's a giver.
 - He doesn't want to take something from you.
He wants to give something to you.
-

4. Jesus is too exclusive.

- Jesus was always reaching out to the least likely people:
 - He ate with sinners. [Mark 2:16-17]
 - He touched the untouchable. [Matthew 8:3]
 - He stood up for an adulterous woman. [John 8:7]
- *Whosoever will may come and drink freely from the river of life.* [Revelation 22:17]
- The gospel is open to every single person.

5. Faith is not intelligent .

- God didn't ask us to leave our brains at the door.
- Atheists have come to know Jesus through intellectual pursuits.
- Most Ivy League schools were started by ministers.
- In Thy light shall we see the light.

".....it pleased God to stir up the heart of one Mr. Harvard (a godly gentleman and a lover of learning, there living among us) to give the one-half of his estate (it being in all about £700) toward the founding of a college, and all his library:" – Harvard, Founding Statement, 1640

- Intellect and God have always been woven together.

You don't have to know it all to place all you have in what you know.



SCRIPTURE JOURNEY

WEEK FOUR

DAY 19 // Read John 9:1-41

DAY 20 // Read John 10:1-42

DAY 21 // Read John 11:1-37

DAY 22 // Read John 11:38-57

DAY 23 // Read John 12:1-19


DAY 24 // Rest + Remember



BEYOND LAUNCH

We hope you've enjoyed this 4 week journey and experienced God through His word. We pray this isn't the end of your journey but just the beginning. We encourage you to pick another book of the Bible, invite a few friends to join you and start reading Scripture as part of your daily routine. This will be essential as you continue to grow and learn.

Welcome to Jesus' Church



**WELCOME TO THE FAMILY.
WELCOME TO THE HOUSE.
WELCOME TO JESUS'
CHURCH, THE PLACE WHERE
YOU HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY.
THIS STORY IS NOT JUST
ABOUT ONE PERSON, IT'S
ABOUT ALL OF US LEANING
IN TOGETHER AND ASKING
GOD TO USE US TO SHINE
HIS LIGHT IN THIS CITY
AND IN THE WORLD.**

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