

B**SEECAMP**

A 40-DAY

JOURNEY

TO REAL

DISCIPLESHIP

BRIAN D. CARLSON



Basecamp: A 40-Day Journey to Real Discipleship
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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my dear friend, ministry partner, and fellow pastor—*Dan Bellows*.

Dan was my Barnabas—an encourager, a co-laborer in Christ, and a faithful companion on the path of ministry. For years, I had the privilege of serving alongside him, learning from his wisdom, his humility, and his unwavering commitment to making disciples.

Whether we were grabbing coffee, heading to lunch, or just running an errand, I lost count of how many people we bumped into who had been personally discipled by Dan. He didn't just preach discipleship—*he lived it*. Quietly, consistently, and powerfully.

In 2022, Dan went home to be with the Lord after a courageous battle with cancer. Though he's no longer with us, his legacy lives on—in the lives of those he discipled and the countless others they are now reaching.

This book is dedicated to the memory of the best disciple-maker I have ever known.

Thank you, my friend. You showed us how to climb.

THE SUMMIT
Living for The Cause
Page 189



CAMP 5
The Death Zone
Page 155



CAMP 4
Ascent Power
Page 117



CAMP 3
The Flesh Within
Page 81



CAMP 2
Salvation & Identity
Page 49



BASECAMP
The Call to Climb
Page 17



CONTENTS

USING THIS BOOKIX

The Structure: A 40-Day Climb	ix
Discipleship Coaching Formats.....	xi
Rest & Reflection.....	xii
A Suggested Weekly Rhythm.....	xiii
Find the Right Fit—Then Take the Next Step	xiii
<i>Basecamp Briefing — Initial Meeting with Coach</i>	14

WEEK 1 — BASECAMP: THE CALL TO CLIMB 17



<i>Day 1</i> — The Invitation to Ascend	19
<i>Day 2</i> — Dropping the Gear That Holds You Back	23
<i>Day 3</i> — Ordinary Climbers, Extraordinary journey	27
<i>Day 4</i> — Heart Check Before the Hike.....	32
<i>Day 5</i> — Obedience Is the Trail Marker	36
<i>Day 6</i> — Why Climb at All?	39
<i>Day 7</i> — Reflection & Rest – Take in the View.....	44

Week 2 — Basecamp Briefing: Meeting with Coach47

WEEK 2 — CAMP 2: SALVATION & IDENTITY 49



<i>Day 8</i> — The Rescue Line of Grace	51
<i>Day 9</i> — Forgiveness – The Load Lifted.....	55
<i>Day 10</i> — New Identity, New Altitude.....	59
<i>Day 11</i> — Death in the Valley, Life on the Mountain	63
<i>Day 12</i> — Adopted into the Expedition	67
<i>Day 13</i> — On Belay – Jesus Holds the Rope.....	71
<i>Day 14</i> — Reflection & Rest – Gratitude	75

Week 3 — Basecamp Briefing: Meeting with Coach79

WEEK 3 — CAMP 3: THE FLESH WITHIN..... 81



Day 15 — The Hidden Avalanche – What Is the Flesh? 83

Day 16 — Rebellion in the Wilderness 88

Day 17 — Survival Mode Isn't Summit Living..... 92

Day 18 — Old Habits Die on the Trail..... 96

Day 19 — Cracks in the Rockface 101

Day 20 — The War Beneath Your Boots 107

Day 21 — Reflection & Rest – Search Me..... 111

Week 4 — Basecamp Briefing: Meeting with Coach 115

WEEK 4 — CAMP 4: ASCENT POWER..... 117



Day 22 — Walking in the Spirit 119

Day 23 — Daily Surrender at High Altitude..... 123

Day 24 — The Fruit Trail – Love That Leads 127

Day 25 — Joy and Peace in the Storm..... 131

Day 26 — Patience, Kindness, & Goodness on the Climb 136

Day 27 — Faithfulness, Gentleness & Self-Control..... 142

Day 28 — Reflection & Rest – The Spirit Kills the Flesh 148

Week 5 — Basecamp Briefing: Meeting with Coach 153

WEEK 5 — CAMP 5: THE DEATH ZONE 155



Day 29 — What Is Jesus Worth to You? 157

Day 30 — Safety isn't a fruit of the Spirit..... 161

Day 31 — The Death Zone of the Cross..... 165

Day 32 — Detaching from the World Below 170

Day 33 — The Unseen Summit 174

Day 34 — What If You Actually Obeyed?..... 178

Day 35 — Reflection & Rest – Burn the Maps 183

Week 6 — Basecamp Briefing: Meeting with Coach 187

WEEK 6 — THE SUMMIT: LIVING FOR THE CAUSE ... 189



Day 36 — Viewing The Cause 191

Day 37 — Echoes in the Canyons..... 197

Day 38 — The Cause Is the Climb 202

Day 39 — The Descent is a Part of the Climb..... 206

Day 40 — Reflection & Rest – For the Sake of the Valley . 210

Basecamp Briefing — Final Meeting with Coach215

THE VALLEY: BRINGING OTHERS UP 217

Epilogue 219

About the Author 222



“It is not the mountain we
conquer, but ourselves.”
— Sir Edmund Hillary,
first man to summit Everest

USING THIS BOOK

Discipleship isn't accidental—it's intentional.

This book was designed to give you a clear, flexible, and deeply personal path to becoming a disciple who makes disciples.

THE STRUCTURE: A 40-DAY CLIMB

Basecamp: A 40-Day Journey to Real Discipleship is structured like a mountain expedition.

Over the course of six weeks, you'll move through six key phases of spiritual growth, represented as sections of the climb:



Basecamp – The Call to Climb

Basecamp lays the foundation, helping you build your faith on truth, not tradition or emotion.



Camp 2 – Salvation & Identity

Here we equip you to understand your identity, salvation, and unique calling—so you know who you are and why you're climbing.



Camp 3 – The Flesh Within

Here we expose the hidden forces of the flesh that can sabotage your growth if left unchecked.



Camp 4 – Ascent Power

Ascent Power introduces the essential power source for the journey: the Holy Spirit, who enables you to walk in victory.



Camp 5 – The Death Zone

The Death Zone calls you to the hardest, but most necessary step—complete surrender of your will and ways to Christ.



The Summit – Living for The Cause

At the Summit you learn to live The Cause, stepping into your purpose by making disciples and calling others to follow Jesus too.

1 DAILY READING

Each phase contains daily personal devotions (Days 1–40) that are designed to help you do more than simply read and reflect. These daily entries will guide you into intentional moments with God, helping you open His Word, listen to His voice, and apply His truth to your real, everyday life. Each devotion includes a focused teaching, a key Scripture, and reflection questions that prompt honest evaluation, Spirit-led transformation, and practical obedience.

Over time, these daily rhythms build spiritual muscle—training you to walk with Jesus more deeply, resist the pull of the flesh, and live as a disciple who makes disciples. This journey isn't about checking a box; it's about being changed by the presence of God—one day at a time.

15

01 Base Camp - The Call to Climb
02 Camp 1 - Salvation & Identity
03 Camp 2 - The Flesh Within
04 Camp 3 - Ascend Power
05 Camp 4 - The Death Zone
06 The Summit - Living for The Cause



THE HIDDEN AVALANCHE - WHAT IS THE FLESH?

1 LEARN THE DANGERS BEFORE THEY CATCH YOU OFF GUARD.

The sky is clear. The trail is quiet. You're climbing steady and strong. Then suddenly, without warning—
an avalanche.
Not from above...
but from within.

A small shift beneath the surface. A hidden weakness. A crack you didn't see. And in a moment, everything threatens to collapse.

Living in Southwestern Colorado, I've learned to respect the mountain in more ways than one.

Not far from where I live is the *Million Dollar Highway*—a breathtaking stretch of road carved through steep cliffs and high passes. It's beautiful, but dangerous. Especially in the winter.

Avalanches are a constant threat.

So much so that avalanche patrols preemptively launch explosives to intentionally trigger small slides—controlled danger to prevent disaster.

And every year, despite the warnings, backcountry skiers are killed because they're caught off guard by hidden weaknesses in the snowpack.

It always starts the same way: everything looks calm. The air is still. The trail is quiet. And then, without warning, the slope goes way—and everything collapses.

That's how the flesh works in the life of a disciple.

It's not always loud, visible, or obvious.

It's the hidden danger inside—the part of you that still resists God, even after you've been saved.

In Scripture, the word "flesh" often points to our old, sinful nature—the self-focused, desire-driven part of us that still craves control.

Yes, your old self was crucified with Christ (Romans 6:6), but the habits it formed, the lies it believed, and the cravings it fed don't vanish instantly.

They linger.

They whisper.

83

2 WEEKLY MEETING

This journey is best experienced in relationship, just as Jesus disciplined His followers face to face. That's why this book is designed to be used in a Coach/Disciple format:

1. **The Disciple** commits to completing one devotion per day for 40 days (6 Weeks).
2. **The Coach** does the same devotions on their own and then meets weekly with the disciple for a time of encouragement, discussion, and challenge.

These weekly gatherings are called Basecamp Briefings.

Each week ends with a *Basecamp Briefing*, where you'll stop and process the climb so far.

Week 2 BASECAMP BRIEFING

Don't climb alone. Meet weekly with a spiritual coach—someone farther along in the journey. Use questions from each section of this talk sheet to reflect, pray, and grow together.

GEAR CHECK

1. Which day's devotion impacted you most this week?
2. Was there a day you missed or found hard to engage with?
3. Did anything in the week's theme of "The Call to Climb" resonate deeply—or challenge you?
4. Review responses to *Trail Reflections & Rope Checks*.

WEATHER REPORT

1. What was the climate of your life this week (circle one)?
☀️ ☁️ 🌧️ 🌨️ 🌪️
2. What was the most stressful or distracting part of your week?
3. What unexpected blessings or encouragements came your way?
4. How did your environment impact your connection with God?

TRAIL CONDITIONS

1. Obstacles or victories that shaped the journey this week?
2. What challenged your faith this week?
3. Did you experience any victories or answered prayers?
4. Was there a moment you had to choose trust over fear?

CLIFFSIDE MOMENTS

1. Was there a moment you felt spiritually on edge?
2. Did temptation try to pull you off course?
3. How did you respond in that moment—flee, fall, fight, or faith?
4. Role-play or "replay" the moment and consider a God-honoring response.

DISCIPLESHIP COACHING FORMATS*

One-to-One Coaching - *A coach walks intentionally with one disciple*



They each complete the daily devotionals on their own, then meet once a week for a Basecamp Briefing. The coach offers encouragement, spiritual guidance, and accountability as the disciple grows. This is a highly effective and relational format for deep spiritual development.

Peer-to-Peer Coaching - *Two disciples walk through the material together, coaching one another*



Each person takes turns listening, asking questions, and supporting the other as they grow. This is ideal for friends, roommates, spouses, or teammates who want to grow in Christ together—and sharpen one another as equals.

Group Coaching - *A coach meets weekly with a small group of disciples, all walking through the material individually during the week*



They each complete the daily devotionals on their own, then meet once a week for a Basecamp Briefing. The coach offers encouragement, spiritual guidance, and accountability as the disciple grows. This is a highly effective and relational format for deep spiritual development.

Circle or Team Coaching - *In this peer format, everyone is both a coach and a disciple*



This type of group meets weekly to process what they're learning and disciple one another mutually. No single leader is "in charge"—instead, the Spirit leads through the group's shared wisdom, humility, and hunger for growth. This model works best with spiritually mature participants who value mutual accountability and shared leadership.

Solo Climb - *The Holy Spirit coaches with one disciple*



While not ideal, some may need to walk through this journey alone, especially if no one is currently available to disciple them. If that's you, go through the 40 days prayerfully and honestly—trusting the Holy Spirit to be your guide and coach. But don't stop there. Once you've completed the journey, look for someone to go back and coach. Don't let your growth end with you—pass it on.

* The Discipleship Coaching Formats are adapted from Catherine Hodgson's work on mentoring. Her resources can be found at shiftmentoring.com.

3 WEEKLY VERSE

Each week of your journey includes a *Trail Marker*—a *key memory verse* designed to anchor you in God’s truth. These verses aren’t random or optional—they’re intentionally chosen to reinforce the week’s theme and guide your heart and mind as you climb.

Why memorize Scripture? Because when the trail gets steep, you need more than inspiration—you need truth buried deep in your heart. Jesus Himself modeled this. When tempted in the wilderness, He didn’t debate or argue—He quoted Scripture. When facing the cross, His words echoed the Psalms. The Word of God wasn’t just something Jesus knew—it was something He lived.

Memorizing Scripture is a powerful act of discipleship. It trains your mind to think like Christ. It gives you clarity in confusion, strength in temptation, and comfort in trials. It keeps you from drifting when the path isn’t clear—and it gives you words to share when others around you are struggling.

One of the primary ways the Holy Spirit speaks to us is through Scripture we’ve hidden in our hearts. In moments of fear, fatigue, or temptation, He brings to mind the very words we need—not randomly, but purposefully. The verses you memorize now become the voice of the Spirit later. They become the whisper of wisdom, the anchor of truth, and the lifeline of faith when you need it most.

So don’t just read the Trail Marker—plant it in your soul. Write it out. Speak it aloud. Meditate on it throughout the week. Let it shape your thoughts and actions. These verses are more than memory—they’re your footing on the climb.



SEVENTH DAY REST & REFLECTION

You may notice the seventh day’s reading is a little different—and that’s intentional. The weekly *Rest & Reflection* day is set apart from the other days in this journey. Rather than introducing new content or challenges, this day is designed for you to pause, breathe, and process what God has been doing

in your heart throughout the week. It's a time to slow down and reflect on the insights you've gained, the areas where you've grown, and the places where God is still at work. Use this day to journal, pray, worship, or simply rest in His presence. The goal isn't progress—it's presence. By stepping back, you give space for truth to sink deeper and for your soul to catch up with what your spirit has received.

A SUGGESTED WEEKLY RHYTHM

Here's a simple weekly schedule to help you stay on track:

Day	What to do
Days 1–6	Complete one daily reading on your own Memorize this week's <i>Trail Marker</i> memory verse
Days 7	Use the <i>Basecamp Briefing</i> with your coach Complete the weekly <i>Reflection & Rest</i> on your own

You'll cover one section per week, but feel free to adjust the pace. The goal isn't speed—it's transformation. While this suggested rhythm offers a more intensive discipleship experience, you're free to go at the pace that best fits your journey.

FIND THE RIGHT FIT—THEN TAKE THE NEXT STEP

The format you choose isn't what matters most—it's your willingness to be discipled and to make disciples.

Jesus didn't give us a program. He gave us a pattern: real people walking together toward Him.

So pick a format. Make a plan.

And start climbing.

Trailhead - Initial Meeting with Coach

BASECAMP BRIEFING

Welcome to Basecamp. This is your orientation—the moment where preparation becomes purpose, and the trail ahead comes into focus

This first meeting sets the tone for your 40-day discipleship journey. If you're meeting with a coach, use this outline as your guide. You don't need to cover every question—just choose the ones that fit best for your conversation. In each section, we've highlighted one key question we recommend including.

TRAILHEAD – CONFIRM THE GOSPEL



1

Before we hit the trail, we need to make sure we're not missing the most essential gear: the Gospel itself.

We don't want to assume that everyone beginning this journey truly knows the Guide—and our Guide is Jesus Christ:

Discipleship is not just about behavior, habits, or spiritual growth—it's about following a Savior who died and rose again to rescue us from sin and bring us into new life. ***If we don't start here, the rest of the climb won't make sense.***

This isn't a test—it's a moment to reflect and ensure the foundation is in place. We want to build on faith in Christ, not familiarity with religion.

Ask:

- **If someone asked you how to begin a relationship with Jesus, what would you say?**

If there's any uncertainty, take time to clarify the G.O.S.P.E.L.:*

GOD created us to be with Him. (*Genesis 1-2*)

OUR sins separate us from God. (*Genesis 3*)

SINS cannot be removed by good deeds. (*Genesis 4-Malachi 4*)

PAYING the price for sin, Jesus died and rose again. (*Matthew-Luke*)

EVERYONE who trusts in Him alone has eternal life. (*John*)

LIFE with Jesus starts now and lasts forever! (*Acts-Revelation*)

- **If you haven't would you like to pray to receive Him right now?**

* The G.O.S.P.E.L. *Life in 6 Words* developed by Greg Stier and Dare2Share.org.

CLIMBING EXPERIENCE – SHARE YOUR STORY



2

Every climber carries a unique set of tools and experiences. Before we begin, let's unpack our stories and share how God brought us here.

Questions to guide the conversation:

- Where are you from?
- **What's your faith story? When did you begin following Jesus?**
- What's a moment that's shaped your walk with Him?
- Have you ever been discipled before? What was that like?
- What are you hoping for from this journey?

WEATHER CHECK – SETTING EXPECTATIONS & RHYTHM



3

Before we head up the trail, let's get clear on how this climb works.

Your Weekly Climb:

- Days 1–6: *Complete one daily devotion on your own. Read, reflect, and journal.*
- Day 7: *Meet for your Basecamp Briefing to talk through the week.*

Set a Weekly Meeting Time:

- *Pick a consistent day and time (in-person, video call, or phone).*
- *Each briefing usually takes 45–60 minutes.*
- *Agree when to begin day 1 (we suggest starting within 24 hours)*

ROUTE PLANNING – SET PERSONAL GROWTH GOALS



4

Where do you want to grow? What areas of your faith do you want to strengthen?

Ask:

- **What do you hope God does in your life over the next 40 days?**
- Is there a specific struggle you want to surrender or overcome?
- How would you describe a “win” at the end of this journey?

Optional: Each disciple write goals below in their book:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

MAP & COMPASS – THE ROUTE AHEAD



5

Review our trail map—six phases, one journey.

- Basecamp – **The Call to Climb**
- Camp 2 – **Salvation & Identity**
- Camp 3 – **The Flesh Within**
- Camp 4 – **Ascent Power**
- Camp 5 – **The Death Zone**
- The Summit – **Living for The Cause**

Each week our Basecamp Briefing (our weekly meeting) includes these climbing checkpoints:

- **Gear Check** – Evaluate your heart and tools
- **Weather Report** – Evaluate the climate of your life
- **Trail Conditions** – What this week’s terrain will bring
- **Cliffside Moments** – Real-life challenges and growth points
- **Summit Glimpses** – God’s vision through Scripture
- **Knots & Tangles** – Obstacles or questions to work through
- **Map & Compass** – Scripture and memory verses to guide you
- **Route Planning** – Steps of obedience to take forward
- **Prayer Around the Fire** – A time to surrender and seek God

*Look at the Week 1 Trail Marker (the memory verse on the next page).
Decide now if you’ll commit to memorizing it this week.*

PRAYER AROUND THE FIRE – DEDICATE THE JOURNEY



6

Close your time by praying together. Thank God for this opportunity, invite His leadership, and pray for open hearts, spiritual hunger, and supernatural transformation.

FINAL CHECKLIST BEFORE YOU PART:

- You’ve confirmed you each understand the gospel and you’ve shared your stories.
- You’ve scheduled your weekly Basecamp Briefing.
- You’ve walked through the six-week trail map.
- You’ve set personal spiritual goals
- You’ve prayed together.
- You’re ready to begin Day 1 on your agreed-upon start date.

Week 1

BASECAMP: THE CALL TO CLIMB

TRAIL MARKER—A guiding memory verse to mark your path this week.

LUKE 9:23

Then he said to them all:
“Whoever wants to be my disci-
ple must deny themselves
and take up their cross daily
and follow me.



BASECAMP
The Call to Climb



“The mountains are calling and
I must go.”

—John Muir
*pioneering naturalist and
founder of the Sierra Club*

01

01 Base Camp - The Call to Climb

02 Camp 2 – Salvation & Identity

03 Camp 3 – The Flesh Within

04 Camp 4 – Ascent Power

05 Camp 5 - The Death Zone

06 The Summit - Living for The Cause



THE INVITATION TO ASCEND

1

WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

Imagine you've just been invited on the adventure of a lifetime—climbing Mount Everest. The invitation isn't for tourists or spectators, but for real climbers. There's no tour bus, no cozy lodge at base camp, no guarantee of comfort or safety. This is a full-on expedition, and you're going to be part of the team.

You stand at the base of the mountain, staring up at the frozen summit lost in the clouds. It's daunting. The air is thin, the terrain unforgiving, and the journey long. You know that reaching the top will require intense training, total commitment, and the guidance of an experienced guide who knows the way. You can't just wander up there on your own. You'll need to trust your guide, follow every instruction, carry your gear, endure harsh conditions, and take one step after another up the slope—no matter how tired or discouraged you feel.

There will be moments when your muscles scream, your lungs burn, and every part of you wants to turn around and go home. But if you keep following, if you keep trusting, you'll be transformed by the journey. You'll see beauty and strength you never imagined. And if you reach the summit, it won't be because you coasted, but because you followed your guide with everything you had.

Now, hold on to that image—because that's what discipleship is like.

Our guide for this journey is Jesus Himself. He didn't just teach about discipleship—He lived it, and He showed us the way. So how did He begin? Not with a classroom or a contract, but with a simple, life-altering invitation: *"Follow me."* He said it to fishermen, tax collectors, and everyday laborers. He wasn't calling them to a weekend getaway or a part-time spiritual side project. He was inviting them to leave everything and step into a lifelong adventure of transformation—one that would change not only their lives, but the world.

The word "disciple" simply means *follower*. In Jesus' time, a disciple didn't just learn information from a teacher. A disciple *followed*—literally. Step by step. Day by day. To be a disciple was to leave behind your old

way of life and walk in the footsteps of your rabbi. You didn't just learn what he knew—you became what he was.

When Jesus called those first disciples, they didn't have a clue where the path would lead. They didn't know they'd face persecution, rejection, and ultimately give up their lives for the message. But they knew enough to say yes to the invitation.

They followed—and it changed everything.

And that's what Jesus is calling you to today.

He's not looking for spectators or casual admirers. He's not looking for people who just believe in His existence. He's calling disciples—men and women who will actually follow Him. Who will walk where He walks, live as He lived, love as He loved, serve as He served, and obey His commands with joy, even when the path is steep and difficult.

To be a disciple means surrendering control and trusting the Guide. It means leaving the comfort of base camp and taking each step in obedience—even when the air gets thin or the climb feels too hard.

But here's the good news: Jesus doesn't just call you—He goes with you. He empowers you. He leads you all the way to the summit, where your life begins to look more and more like His.

This book is your gear guide. It's your base camp briefing. It will prepare you for the journey ahead and help you understand what it really means to be a follower of Jesus.

You were never meant to stay at the bottom of the mountain. He's calling you to climb.

Will you follow?

2

CHECK THE MAP

Luke 5:1-11

¹ One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. ² He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. ³ He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

⁴ When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

⁵ Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all

night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

⁶ When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. ⁷ So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

⁸ When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" ⁹ For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, ¹⁰ and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." ¹¹ So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

3

TRAIL REFLECTIONS

1. If Jesus showed up in the middle of your ordinary day—at your job, your school, your home—and looked you in the eyes and said, “Follow Me,” What parts of your life would be the hardest to leave behind?

2. What would it look like to surrender those areas to Jesus today—and what step can you take right now to begin trusting Him more fully with every part of your life?

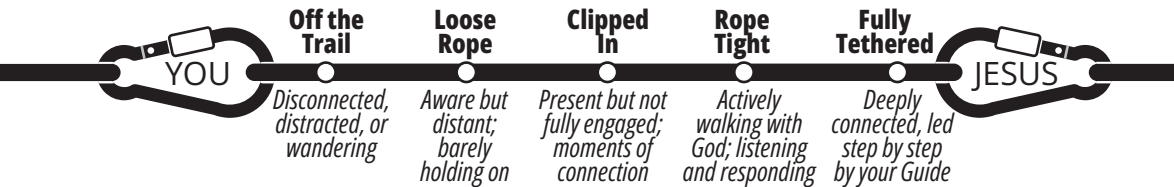
4

ROPE CHECK

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

Daily Life & Habits

- Time management
- Morning and evening routines
- Media consumption
- Eating and exercise habits
- Integrity when no one's watching



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

02

01 Base Camp - The Call to Climb

02 Camp 2 - Salvation & Identity

03 Camp 3 - The Flesh Within

04 Camp 4 - Ascent Power

05 Camp 5 - The Death Zone

06 The Summit - Living for The Cause



DROPPING THE GEAR THAT HOLDS YOU BACK

1

COUNTING THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

You've accepted the invitation to climb. The air is crisp. Your heart is pounding. You've taken your first few steps toward the summit. But as the incline steepens and your backpack starts to dig into your shoulders, a question begins to surface: *"Do I really need all this gear?"*

At first, it seemed wise to bring it all—those extra supplies, your favorite comforts from home, backup plans, safety nets. But now, each step feels harder than the last. You're beginning to realize something: not everything you packed is meant to go to the summit.

That's exactly what Jesus was getting at when He talked about counting the cost. Discipleship is not a hobby. It's not a weekend escape or a side hustle. It's an all-in, leave-everything-behind, strap-on-your-gear-and-climb kind of commitment.

In Luke 14, Jesus looks out at the enthusiastic crowd that's been following Him and does something completely unexpected. Instead of trying to grow His fanbase, He thins it out:

"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple... any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple." —Luke 14:26, 33

Why would Jesus say something so extreme? Because He knew that the climb would test everything. If your heart is still tethered to the comforts and attachments of your old life, you won't make it. You'll get part-way up, realize how much it costs, and turn back down the trail.

This isn't about literally hating your family or rejecting all possessions—it's about making sure nothing holds a higher place in your heart than Jesus. It's about loosening your grip on everything else so you can fully grab hold of Him.

If you're going to follow Jesus to the summit, some things need to be left behind:

- **The need for everyone's approval.**

- **The security blanket of control.**
- **The idols of comfort, reputation, or success.**
- **The hidden sin you've been excusing.**
- **Even your own plans for your life.**

The longer you try to carry that weight, the slower your progress—and the greater your risk of turning back.

Think about professional climbers. Before they summit Everest, they carefully weigh every ounce of gear. The question isn't, "*Can I carry this?*" The question is, "*Is this worth carrying?*" If it doesn't help them reach the top, it stays at base camp.

So what's in your pack right now that doesn't belong?

What's slowing you down?

What are you still clinging to that Jesus is asking you to lay down?

Remember: this isn't about earning your salvation. It's about clearing the path to follow your Savior. The summit is worth it—but you'll never make it with divided loyalty or half-hearted effort.

Jesus isn't asking for perfection. He's asking for surrender.

He's asking you to drop the gear that holds you back and trust that what He has ahead is better than anything you're leaving behind.

2

CHECK THE MAP

Luke 14:25-33

²⁵ *Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said:* ²⁶ *"If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple.* ²⁷ *And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.*

²⁸ *"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?"* ²⁹ *For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you,* ³⁰ *saying, 'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish.'*

³¹ *"Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand?"* ³² *If he is*

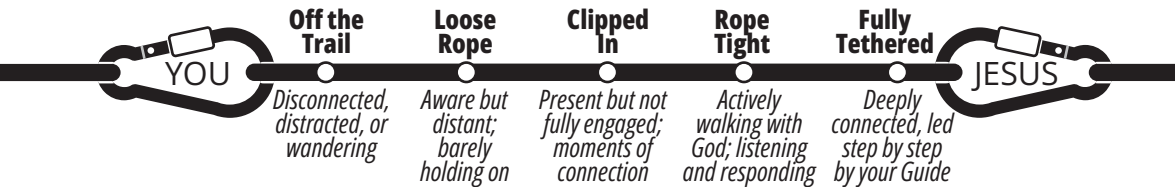
4

ROPE CHECK

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

Emotional Life

- Anxiety and fear
- Loneliness or discouragement
- Anger and frustration
- Joy and celebration
- Grief and loss



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

03

01 Base Camp - The Call to Climb

02 Camp 2 – Salvation & Identity

03 Camp 3 – The Flesh Within

04 Camp 4 – Ascent Power

05 Camp 5 - The Death Zone

06 The Summit - Living for The Cause



ORDINARY CLIMBERS, EXTRAORDINARY JOURNEY

1

WALKING TOGETHER TOWARDS JESUS

The climb continues.

You've left base camp. You've said *yes* to the journey. You're stepping out in faith, moving toward the summit. But now the trail gets harder. Steeper. More confusing. You come to a fork in the path, or maybe a sheer drop that wasn't on your map. You pause and ask yourself: "What now?"

That's when you hear footsteps.

Not from above—but from behind you.

Someone's coming. A fellow climber. Weathered gear. Steady stride. A few scrapes and scars from the journey, but a clear look of resolve in their eyes.

They've been here before.

And now—they're here for you.

That's what a coach is in the life of a disciple.

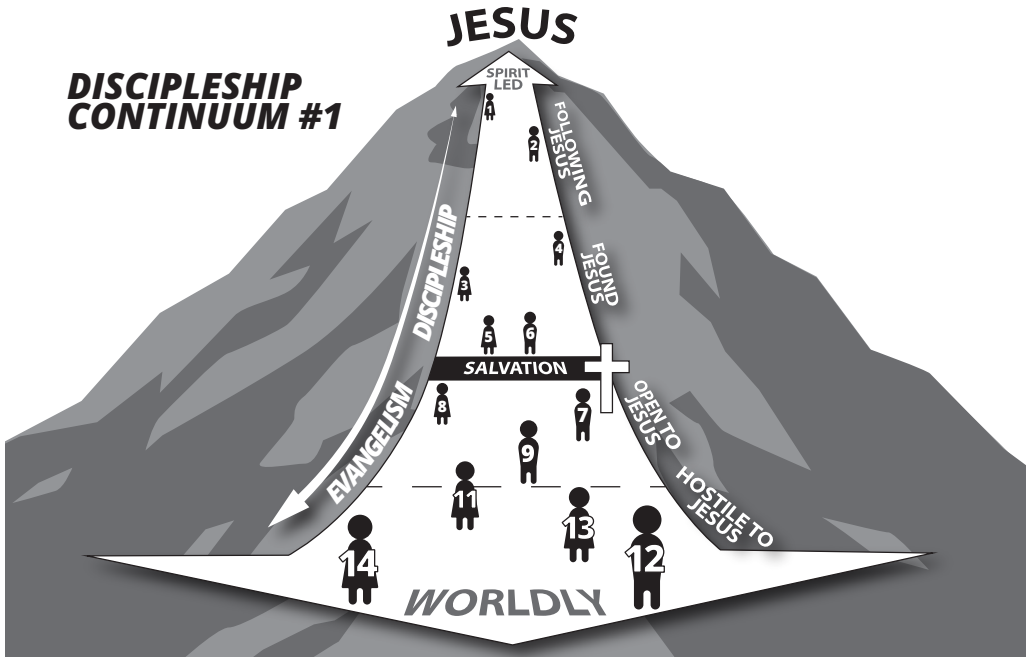
Someone who's further along in their walk with Jesus.

Someone who doesn't just talk about the climb—but has actually lived it.

Someone who walks beside you, showing you how to take your next step.

Take a look at the image on the next page—*the Discipleship Continuum #1*.

This chart is a snapshot of the spiritual climb we're all on—each of us at a different point on the trail. It begins with life far from Jesus, moves through the moment we meet Him, and continues as we learn to walk with Him in our everyday lives. Look closely at the line running through the middle, marked by the cross—that moment represents salvation. Everyone above that line of salvation symbolizes those who have come to know Jesus as Lord. But even among believers, no one is in the exact same spot. Some are just starting out, while others are farther along in their journey. They haven't just found Jesus for salvation—they've also learned to follow Him consistently as Lord.



Everyone is found somewhere along this continuum:

1. **Hostile to Jesus** – *Actively resisting Him.*
2. **Open to Jesus** – *Searching, curious, or exploring.*
3. **Found Jesus** – *Saved, but still learning the basics of the faith.*
4. **Following Jesus** – *Growing, surrendering, and learning to live more like Him.*

Now ask yourself honestly:

Where am I right now in my walk with Jesus?

Am I just starting to explore who He is? Have I recently found Him and begun the journey of faith? Or have I been walking with Him, growing, and learning to live a Spirit-led life?

Use a pen or pencil and draw a person to represent where you would be on the map.

You can even label it with your name or initials.

This isn't about where you wish you were.

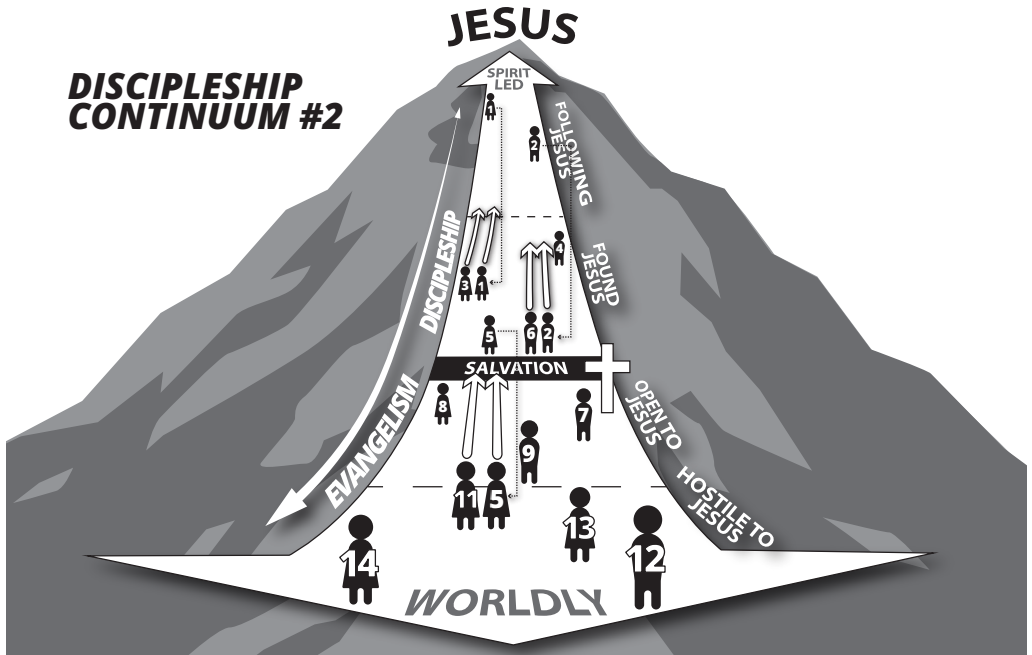
This is about where you are—because that's the only place you can take your next step from.

After marking yourself on the map, ask:

- What's one small step I can take to move closer to Jesus?
- Who might I invite to walk with me on the journey?

Discipleship is not a solo expedition.

If you're trying to follow Jesus alone, you'll miss some of the most important parts of the journey.



This isn't a solo climb. It's a shared one.

We grow when someone walks with us, helps us, corrects us, and loves us enough to say, "Keep going."

You're never too young in the faith to be coached.

You're never too young in the faith to be coached, and you're never so far along that you don't still need one. We all need a coach—someone who will spur us on and draw us closer to Jesus.

Now look at the second image—the *Discipleship Continuum #2*. It's the same map—but now there's motion.

People who are farther along in their walk with Jesus have left their place of comfort.

They're not just sitting at a scenic overlook, enjoying the view. They've turned around, retraced their steps, and are now walking with others toward Jesus.

That's discipleship. That's what a coach does.

A coach is someone just a few steps ahead of you who says, "I've been where you are—and I'll walk with you."

They're not perfect. But they've wrestled through questions.

They've stumbled and gotten back up.

They know the terrain, and they care enough to help you navigate it too.

Jesus could have handed His disciples a manual.

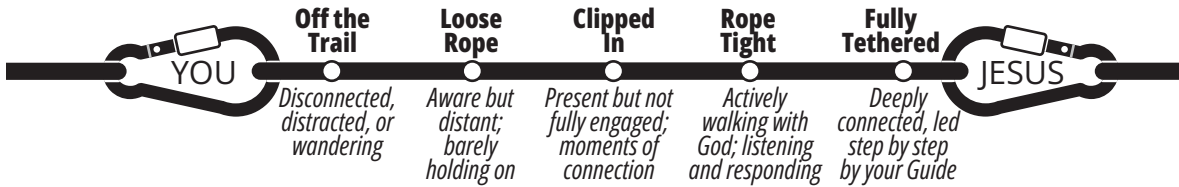
Instead, He gave them Himself—life on life. He walked with them, taught them, corrected them, challenged them, and then sent them to do

4 ROPE CHECK

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

Mental and Thought Life

- Thought patterns and self-talk
- Discernment and decision-making
- Identity and self-worth
- Dealing with lies or spiritual warfare
- Battling temptation and negative thinking



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

04

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HEART CHECK BEFORE THE HIKE

1

LOVING GOD WITH ALL YOU ARE IS YOUR FUEL

Before every climb, there's a critical moment.

You pause. You check your gear. You take a deep breath. But most importantly—you check your fuel source. Without it, your climb won't last long. You'll burn out halfway up the mountain, exhausted and empty.

In the journey of following Jesus, your fuel source isn't talent or passion.

It's not even discipline or determination.

It's love.

That's why Jesus made it clear what matters most before you start your hike:

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.” —Matthew 22:37–38

Everything starts here.

Before you lace up your boots.

Before you teach, lead, serve, or obey—you need to love Him *with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind*.

Maybe you've grown up thinking that following Jesus means keeping a list of spiritual rules.

Do this. Don't do that. Work harder. Try more. Be better.

But let's be honest—you *can't fall in love with a list of laws*.

You don't build a relationship with a checklist.

Rules can inform you, but they'll never transform you.

Jesus didn't come to hand out a spiritual to-do list.

He came to invite you into a relationship—one built on love, not legalism.

Real love can't be manufactured by rule-keeping.

It grows when you actually know the One who loves you first.

Peter captured it beautifully:

Though you have not seen him, you love him.

—1 Peter 1:8

This journey isn't about trying to impress God with your performance.

It's about enjoying Him.

Delighting in Him.

Walking with Him step by step—not to earn His love, but because you've already received it.

Love is the fuel that powers the climb. The higher you go, the more you'll realize—obedience without love burns out fast. But when love is your motivation, obedience becomes a joy, not a chore. Just don't confuse love with leniency—love doesn't cancel obedience, it compels it.

Jesus said it plainly:

*“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”—
John 14:15*

Obedience without love is religion.

Love without obedience is illusion.

True love always shows up in how we live. It sacrifices. It surrenders. It serves.

That's what Jesus did when He laid down His life for you.

*By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us,
and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.
—1 John 3:16*

Love fuels the climb—and shapes the path we walk.

So, before you keep climbing... pause. Not to check your boots or your pack—but your heart. Are you loving God with everything you are?

Not just attending services.

Not just reading devotionals.

Not just doing Christian things.

But actually loving Him—with your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Because if your love grows cold, your climb will stall.

But when your heart is burning with love for Him, you'll have strength for the steepest slopes.

2

CHECK THE MAP

Matthew 22:34-40

³⁴ Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. ³⁵ One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: ³⁶ “Teacher, which is

the greatest commandment in the Law?”

³⁷ Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment.

³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

3

TRAIL REFLECTIONS

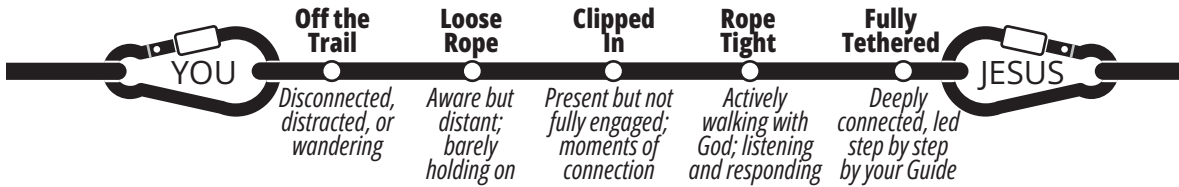
1. What motivates your walk with Jesus right now—and how does love for God play into that? What other motivations sometimes take the lead, and how can they be redirected?
2. When do you find it easiest to delight in God—and when do you find yourself just going through the motions? What do those patterns reveal about your relationship with Him?
3. What’s been fueling your spiritual life lately—love, obligation, guilt, habit, or something else? How is that fuel affecting your joy, passion, and endurance in the journey?

4**ROPE CHECK**

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

Relationships

- Marriage
- Parenting
- Friendships
- Mentoring/discipleship relationships
- Conflict resolution and forgiveness



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

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OBEDIENCE IS THE TRAIL MARKER

1

TRUST HIS PATH, EVEN WHEN IT'S STEEP

You've probably seen them if you've ever hiked a serious trail—small signs nailed to trees, brightly colored flags tied to branches, or stacks of stones marking the way. Trail markers.

When the fog rolls in and the path gets hard to follow, you look for those signs.

They don't always make sense in the moment.

They don't always lead to the easiest route.

But if you want to reach the summit—you must follow them.

In the life of a disciple, obedience is your trail marker.

It's how you know you're still on the path Jesus is leading you down.

And sometimes... that path gets steep.

There will be moments when everything in you wants to stop. You know the wise thing to do is to trust the trail, even when it's tough, but it gets more difficult with each step.

The climb feels unfair. The trail seems unclear. The cost seems too high. And then Jesus says something like:

"If anyone loves me, he will keep my word..."

— John 14:23

It's in those moments—when you choose obedience over ease—that you declare your love for Him most loudly.

Because obedience isn't about understanding everything.

It's about trusting the One who does.

The truth is: everyone's following someone.

Your desires. Your fears. The culture. Your past. Your plans.

But Jesus calls you to follow Him.

Not just in belief—but in obedience. Obedience reveals who you're following

"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?"—Luke 6:46

Those are hard words—but they're spoken in love.

He's not trying to control you like a puppet. He's trying to lead you to life.

This is why it is so important to obey His trail markers revealed throughout Scripture. Every step of obedience matters. Even the small ones.

Even the ones that feel unnoticed.

Especially the ones that cost you something.

Every time you obey, it's like placing another marker on the trail that says, *"This way. Keep going. Jesus is worth it."*

And what's amazing is—your obedience doesn't just guide you.

It guides others who are watching you climb.

2

CHECK THE MAP

Luke 6:46-49

⁴⁶ "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? ⁴⁷ As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like. ⁴⁸ They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. ⁴⁹ But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."

3

TRAIL REFLECTIONS

1. Think about a time you obeyed Jesus even when it was hard. What was the outcome? How did that shape your trust in Him?

2. Where are you currently feeling tension between your desires and Jesus' commands? What might it look like to surrender and obey?

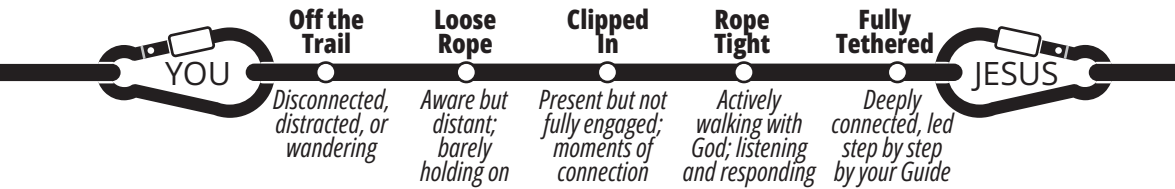
4

ROPE CHECK

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

Spiritual Growth

- Personal prayer and Scripture reading
- Worship and intimacy with God
- Listening to the Holy Spirit
- Obedience and surrender
- Memorizing and meditating on Scripture



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

06

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WHY CLIMB AT ALL?

1 YOU DON'T LEAVE THE VALLEY JUST TO ESCAPE—IT'S BECAUSE THERE'S SOMETHING GLORIOUS AT THE TOP

The air is thin. Your legs ache.

The trail behind you is scattered with sacrifices—comfort, old habits, relationships, selfish ambitions.

The question that once whispered in the back of your mind now roars: *Why am I doing this?* Why keep going when the valley was easier? Why give up everything just to follow a path that's narrow, steep, and costly?

Here's the truth—you weren't made to settle in the valley. You were made for the summit. But even more than that, you were made for the One who's calling you upward, waiting to meet you there.

Every great expedition needs a reason.

No serious climber packs their gear, risks their life, and treks across glaciers just to experience hardship.

They climb for something greater—to stand where few have stood. To see what few have seen.

To reach the top and breathe in a beauty that makes every painful step worth it.

That's what discipleship is.

It's not aimless suffering. It's not religious duty.

It's the path to the deepest joy and most breathtaking purpose imaginable—a life with Jesus, transformed into His image, and caught up in His mission.

Following Jesus isn't just about leaving something behind. It's about running toward something infinitely better.

And here's the secret to the climb of discipleship that makes it all worth it: the goal isn't spiritual achievement. It's not a polished reputation, perfect morality, or a seat in a church pew.

The goal is Jesus.

That's why Paul, after a life of dramatic sacrifice, rejection, imprisonment, and pain, could say:

*I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God
has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*

—*Philippians 3:14*

Paul wasn't chasing a crown of comfort. He was chasing Christ.

He was fixated on the One who met him on the road, turned his life upside down, and became the burning passion of his soul.

This wasn't about performance. It was about pursuit.

Not climbing for climbing's sake—but because of who was waiting at the top.

Let's be honest—sometimes we want to follow Jesus because we're desperate to leave something behind:

- A painful past
- An empty lifestyle
- A sense of aimlessness
- The crushing weight of guilt

And while Jesus does rescue us from all those things, He doesn't lead us into the mountains just to escape the valley.

He calls us upward because there's glory at the top.

Not worldly glory. Not fame or recognition.

But the glory of knowing Him.

Paul described it this way:

*I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing
worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord...*

—*Philippians 3:8*

That's it.

That's why we climb.

That's why we keep pressing on, even when the road disappears under our feet or the storms roll in.

Because knowing Jesus is better. Always.

Sometimes we mistake the journey for the destination. We think the goal of discipleship is to become better versions of ourselves. To be more disciplined. More spiritual. More impressive.

But that's just self-improvement in disguise.

The true goal of discipleship is not self—it's Christ. He's the prize.

We don't climb for the sake of climbing. We don't follow Jesus just to become "good people." We follow Him because He is the treasure, the joy, the reward, the end of every longing.

Close your eyes and imagine the top of the mountain. Not a pile of medals or a roaring crowd. But Jesus—radiant, powerful, tender, waiting.

The One who called you.
The One who never stopped walking with you.
The One who carried you when you couldn't carry yourself.
The One who is now calling you into His glory, into deeper intimacy,
into eternal joy.
That's why you climb.

2

CHECK THE MAP

Philippians 3:7-14

⁷ But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. ¹⁰ I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

¹² Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

3

TRAIL REFLECTIONS

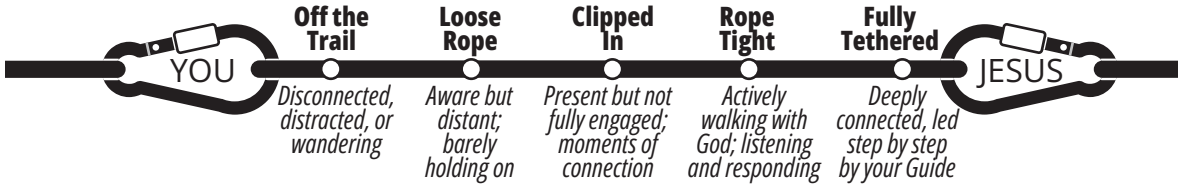
1. What's motivating your climb right now? Is your heart truly aimed at Jesus, or are you hoping He'll just make life more comfortable?

4**ROPE CHECK**

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

Work/School and Calling

- Scholastics/Career decisions
- Integrity in your work/school work
- Stewarding talents and gifts
- Financial decisions and generosity
- Dealing with workplace/school stress or conflict



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

07

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REFLECTION & REST - TAKE IN THE VIEW

1

WHAT HAS JESUS CALLED YOU TO LEAVE BEHIND?

Every serious expedition builds in time to rest and reflect. Today is that day. After six days of climbing—listening, learning, surrendering—it's time to pause.

You're not at the summit yet, but you've made progress. You've left base camp. You've counted the cost. You've taken inventory of what's holding you back. You've lifted your eyes toward the goal and begun the ascent.

Now...

Take in the view.

Look back at where you started.

Look ahead to where you're going.

And most importantly—listen for what Jesus is speaking to you in this moment.

This isn't about pushing forward or "doing" something new.

Today is about rest. Reflection. Stillness in His presence.

2

CHECK THE MAP

Psalm 46

¹ *God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.*

² *Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give
way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,*

³ *though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.*

⁴ *There is a river whose streams make glad the city
of God,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.*

⁵ *God is within her, she will not fall;
God will help her at break of day.*

⁶ Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;
 he lifts his voice, the earth melts.
⁷ The LORD Almighty is with us;
 the God of Jacob is our fortress.
⁸ Come and see what the LORD has done,
 the desolations he has brought on the earth.
⁹ He makes wars cease
 to the ends of the earth.
 He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
 he burns the shields with fire.
¹⁰ He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;
 I will be exalted among the nations,
 I will be exalted in the earth."
¹¹ The LORD Almighty is with us;
 the God of Jacob is our fortress.

3

CLIMB REFLECTIONS - INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Find a quiet place**—Turn off distractions. Silence your phone. Be present.
2. **Reflect on the last six days.** Reread parts of the devotionals or skim your journal notes. What themes have stood out to you? What has God stirred in your heart?
3. **Answer this key question: What is Jesus calling me to leave behind?** (Is it a comfort zone? A fear? A hidden sin? A false identity? A habit? Write it down.
4. **Then ask: What is Jesus inviting me into instead?** Is it deeper trust? Greater obedience? A relationship? A step of courage? Write that down too.
5. **Rest.** Spend a few unhurried moments simply sitting with Jesus. No agenda. No striving. Just being with Him.

4**PRAYER**

Write out a prayer, in your words, along these lines:

Jesus, thank You for walking with me this week.

As I pause today, help me to see where I've been and where You're leading me. Show me what I need to leave behind—and give me the courage to let it go. Teach me to rest in Your presence and trust in Your pace. You are the reason I climb, and I want to follow You with my whole heart.

Amen.

Week 2

BASECAMP BRIEFING

Don't climb alone. Meet weekly with a spiritual coach—someone farther along in the journey. Use questions from each section of this talk sheet to reflect, pray, and grow together.

GEAR CHECK

1

1. Which day's devotion impacted you most this week?
2. Was there a day you missed or found hard to engage with?
3. Did anything in the week's theme of *"The Call to Climb"* resonate deeply—or challenge you?
4. **Review responses to *Trail Reflections & Rope Checks*.**

WEATHER REPORT

2

1. **What was the climate of your life this week (circle one)?**



TRAIL CONDITIONS

3

1. Obstacles or victories that shaped the journey this week?
2. What challenged your faith this week?
3. Did you experience any victories or answered prayers?
4. **Was there a moment you had to choose trust over fear?**

CLIFFSIDE MOMENTS

4

1. Was there a moment you felt spiritually on edge?
2. **Did temptation try to pull you off course?**
3. How did you respond in that moment—flee, fall, fight, or faith?
4. Role-play or “replay” the moment and consider a God-honoring response.

SUMMIT GLIMPSES

5

1. Describe any breakthroughs, joy, or nearness to God you experienced this week.
2. When did you feel closest to God this week?
3. Did you gain any clarity or direction?
4. What joy did you experience as a follower of Jesus?

KNOTS AND TANGLES

6

1. Is there a sin or habit that tripped you this week?
2. Any relationships that felt tense or unresolved?
3. Are you carrying something alone that you shouldn't be?
4. Identify one "knot" that needs untangling through grace or action

MAP & COMPASS

7

1. If your spiritual life were a trail map, where would you be? (e.g., *Basecamp? Climbing strong? Off-course? Resting? Lost?*)
2. Has God changed your direction or revealed something new?
3. Are you where you thought you'd be by now?

ROUTE PLANNING

8

1. What spiritual practice do you want to grow in this week?
2. Is God calling you to do something specific?
3. What's one way you'll pursue Christ intentionally?
4. Discuss next week's theme, "*Foundation of Salvation*" and what to expect.
5. Set 1–2 spiritual "trail markers" for the coming week.

PRAYER AROUND THE FIRE

9

1. Write down each other's prayer requests and pray.

Week 2

CAMP 2: SALVATION & IDENTITY

TRAIL MARKER—A guiding memory verse to mark your path this week.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!



CAMP 2
Salvation & Identity



“Choose the mountain you want to climb: don’t pay attention to what other people say... You’re the only one responsible and you should be sure of what you’re doing.”

—Paulo Coelho

Brazilian author, best known for his themes of spiritual journey and personal destiny

08

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THE RESCUE LINE OF GRACE

1 SALVATION IS THE ROPE THROWN FROM ABOVE

Imagine this.

You're stranded on a narrow ledge halfway up a cliff. The wind howls. The drop below is deadly, and the climb above is impossible on your own. Your strength is gone. Your gear failed. You've tried everything—called for help, searched for handholds—but nothing works.

You can't climb out.

You can't save yourself.

You're stuck.

Hopeless.

Until... a rope drops from above.

Strong. Secure. Lowered by someone who sees you.

Someone strong enough to pull you up.

Someone who says, "*Tie in. I've got you.*"

That rope is grace.

And that moment—that rescue—is salvation.

We like to think we can earn our way to God. Be good enough. Do better. Climb higher.

But the truth is—we all fall short. Salvation isn't you climbing up. It's Jesus coming down.

We were never going to make it to the summit on our own. Our sin left us stuck, separated from God, unable to reach Him through our own efforts.

And that's when grace showed up.

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—
and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not
by works, so that no one can boast.*

—Ephesians 2:8-9

Grace means undeserved favor.

God saw us in our hopelessness and chose to rescue us—not because we earned it, but because He loves us.

Jesus came down. He took the fall we deserved. He lived the life we couldn't live and died the death we should have died. And then He rose again, holding out His hand and saying, "I've made a way. Come with Me."

Maybe you met Jesus years ago—at camp, in a quiet moment at church, or during a crisis when you realized you couldn't save yourself. Or maybe your salvation is still fresh—something new and life-changing that happened recently.

Either way, there's a danger: We can forget the miracle.

We can get so used to church, faith, and routines that we stop marveling at the rescue itself.

We must be intentional to remember—and refuse to lose—the wonder of our salvation. It's far too easy to let the greatest miracle we've ever experienced fade into routine. But salvation was never meant to become background noise. It's the moment everything changed. Don't let familiarity steal the awe.

Salvation is never ordinary. It is the greatest miracle in your life—the moment your eternity was changed forever.

That's why today, we pause.

We slow down.

We remember.

Because grace never stops being amazing.

Salvation isn't about doing more—it's about trusting the One who did everything.

When you tie into Jesus, your eternity is secured. You're no longer dangling on your own efforts. You're connected to the One who never fails. He becomes your safety, your strength, your lifeline.

This is the beginning of discipleship.

Not your striving—but His saving.

So tie in. Trust the rope.

2

CHECK THE MAP

Ephesians 2:1-10

¹ As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature

deserving of wrath. ⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

3

TRAIL REFLECTIONS

1. Have you ever truly tied into the rope of grace? Not just known about Jesus—but trusted Him fully for your salvation?
2. Are there ways you’re still trying to climb to God on your own strength? What would it look like to let go and trust Him?
3. Have you grown numb to the beauty of salvation? Take a moment to remember what He saved you from—and how He rescued you.
4. Who do you know that’s still stranded and doesn’t know a rescue line is available? How could you point them to Jesus this week?

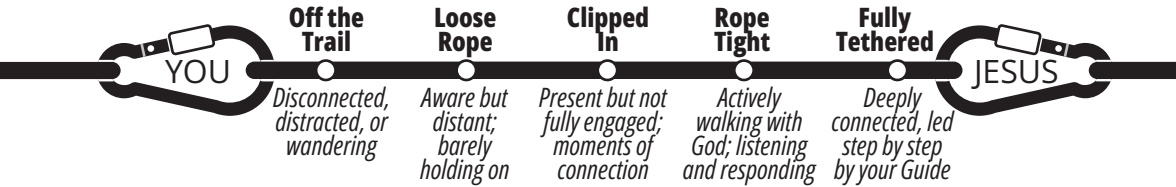
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ROPE CHECK

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

Mission & Evangelism

- Boldness to share the gospel
- Compassion for the lost
- Eyes to see God’s open doors
- Sensitivity to the Spirit’s nudges
- Staying faithful to The Cause



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

09

01 Base Camp - The Call to Climb
02 Camp 2 - Salvation & Identity
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FORGIVENESS – THE LOAD LIFTED

1 SIN WEIGHS YOU DOWN. JESUS REMOVES THE BURDEN

Yesterday, we paused to reflect on the incredible truth of our salvation—that Jesus came down, found us stuck and helpless, and threw us the rope of grace.

For many of us, that moment of rescue—whether it happened years ago or just recently—was unforgettable. We rejoiced. We tied into Jesus and felt the joy of being saved, made new, and pulled into life.

But here's the tragic truth:

Many Christians never fully live in that forgiveness.

Yes, they know they're saved.

They believe in the cross.

But somewhere along the trail, they pick up a heavy pack filled with shame, guilt, and regret—and they start carrying what Jesus already took care of.

Picture the climb again.

You've tied into the rope. You've been rescued. You're on your way up.

But strapped to your back is a pack full of old sin, past failures, and voices of shame whispering, *"You're not really free. You're still unworthy. You still have to pay for what you did."*

And so you keep trudging forward—saved, yes—but heavy. Burdened. Weighed down. We carry the weight that Jesus already carried and paid for.

Jesus didn't save you so you would have to carry your sin again. He took it so you wouldn't have to.

Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. —Matthew 11:28

Jesus didn't just save you from eternity apart from Him—He saved you from the crushing weight of trying to carry your sin and shame in your own strength.

Forgiveness means the weight is gone.

When Jesus went to the cross, He didn't pay for some of your sin.

He paid for all of it.
He didn't just make a down payment and expect you to carry the rest. He bore it all.

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. —1 Peter 2:24

If you're still carrying shame, guilt, or hidden sin—you're carrying what Jesus already crushed.

And here's what that means:

- You don't have to punish yourself anymore.
- You don't have to hide or fake it.
- You don't have to wonder if you're clean enough, good enough, or deserving enough. Jesus didn't wait for you to be worthy. He made you worthy—by His blood.

Imagine loosening the straps, taking a deep breath, and letting that burden hit the ground.

Gone. Released.

No longer yours to carry.

That's what forgiveness is. It's not earned. It's received.

And once you receive it, you walk lighter. You climb freer. You live fully.

It's time to drop the pack.

2

CHECK THE MAP

Matthew 11:25-30

²⁵ At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. ²⁶ Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.

²⁷ "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

²⁸ "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

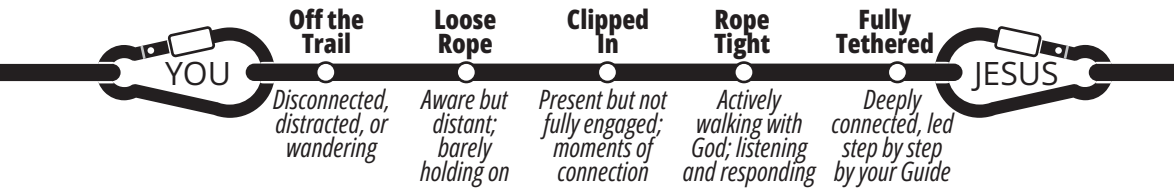
4

ROPE CHECK

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

Character Formation

- Integrity when no one's watching
- Patience and humility
- Servant-heartedness
- Gratitude and contentment
- Perseverance in trials



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

10

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NEW IDENTITY, NEW ALTITUDE

1 YOU'RE A NEW CREATION SO CLIMB WITH CONFIDENCE

There's a moment in every climber's journey where they realize they've reached a new elevation.

The air is different.

The view has changed.

And suddenly, they're not thinking like a beginner anymore. They're moving with new confidence—not because the mountain got easier, but because they've changed.

That's what happens when you understand who you are in Christ.

Yesterday we talked about forgiveness—the load lifted, the weight dropped. But the story doesn't end there.

You're not just forgiven.

You've been remade.

You're not climbing as the same person who started at the base of the mountain. You've got a new name, a new heart, a new direction, and a new power at work in you.

You're no longer defined by what you've done, what's been done to you, or what the world says about you. You are defined by what Jesus has done for you and who He says you are in Him.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

—2 Corinthians 5:17

When you gave your life to Jesus, He didn't just clean you up—He made you completely new.

- You were a *sinner*—now you are a **saint**.
- You were *separated*—now you are **adopted**.
- You were *dead in sin*—now you are **alive in Christ**.
- You were *defined by failure*—now you are **marked by grace**.
- You were *unworthy*—now you are **God's beloved child**.

And here's the key: this identity is *not based on your performance—it's based on Jesus' finished work*.

That means you don't have to earn your place on the mountain.

You don't have to climb in fear or insecurity, but fully assured that you belong here because of Jesus.

You can climb in freedom and confidence—because your identity is secure.

Many believers climb like they're still under judgment.

They believe they're forgiven, but they don't feel free. That's why we spent time yesterday focusing on letting go of the shame, guilt, and hidden sin we've been carrying—burdens Jesus already crushed.

But here's the truth:

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. —Romans 8:1

No condemnation. None. Not from God. It's gone. How do we know?

*For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his love for those who fear him;
as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed
our transgressions from us. —Psalm 103:11-12*

That means you don't have to second-guess whether you belong. You don't have to wonder if you've disqualified yourself. You don't have to carry the old name tag: "Failure. Unworthy. Disappointment."

That name doesn't fit you anymore.

You are in Christ.

You are a new creation.

You are forgiven, free, chosen, and secure.

So climb with your head high and your heart full—not with pride in yourself, but with confidence in who Jesus says you are.

2

CHECK THE MAP

2 Corinthians 5:11-21

¹¹ Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. ¹² We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart. ¹³ If we are "out of our mind," as some say, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is

for you. ¹⁴ For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.

¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

¹⁶ So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

3

TRAIL REFLECTIONS

1. Do you still carry any shame or condemnation that Jesus already removed?
2. What old label are you still living under—and how can you replace it with God's truth?
3. How does knowing there is “no condemnation” change the way you approach your walk with Jesus?

4. What does it look like to climb in confidence today—not in your strength, but in your identity in Christ?

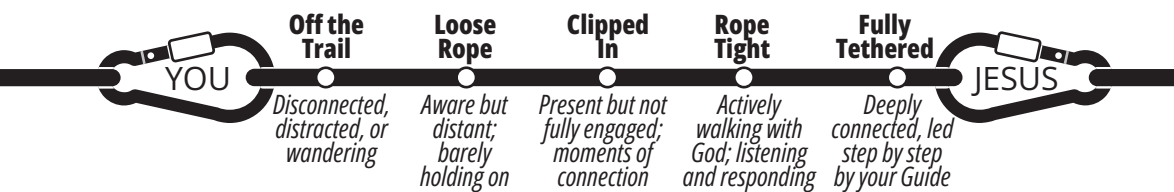
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ROPE CHECK

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

Foundational Identity Areas

- Knowing who I am in Christ
- Trusting that I'm fully loved and accepted
- Believing I have a purpose
- Living from a place of grace, not performance
- Rejecting lies about my past or worth



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

11

01 Base Camp - The Call to Climb
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DEATH IN THE VALLEY, LIFE ON THE MOUNTAIN

1 THE TRAILHEAD WASN'T A STARTING LINE— IT WAS A GRAVE

Every trail has a starting point. A trailhead.

It's the place where you take your first steps, check your gear, and leave behind everything you won't need for the climb ahead.

For those who follow Jesus, the trailhead isn't just a starting line—it's a grave.

Because before you could truly climb, something had to die.

The moment you placed your faith in Jesus, something powerful happened—far deeper than a new direction or spiritual resolution.

In that moment, your old self died.

*"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live,
but Christ lives in me." —Galatians 2:20*

Your old self—the broken, sinful, self-centered, fallen version of you—was put to death.

Not ignored.

Not rehabilitated.

Not kept around just in case.

Crucified.

That means the version of you that once lived for pride, fear, lust, lies, performance, and self-preservation no longer has the right to lead the way.

It died when Christ died.

And now—Christ lives in you.

Here's the problem:

Many believers say they've left the valley, but they keep dragging the corpse of their old self up the trail.

They let past habits, old identities, and sinful desires climb alongside them, whispering lies like, "You'll never change," or "This is just who you are."

But that's not who you are anymore. That person is dead.

“For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with...”

—Romans 6:6

Yes, the pull of sin is still real—but its power has been broken.

You don't owe your old self anything.

You don't have to listen to its voice or carry its weight.

You can leave it buried before the trailhead—because that's where it belongs.

And this is why, over the past few days, we've talked so much about letting go of past sins, releasing shame, and shedding the extra weight.

Because you can't live in the freedom of your new identity if you're still chained to the old one. You can't climb with confidence while dragging the lies of who you used to be.

The trail ahead is steep, but your footing gets stronger the moment you believe this truth: The old you is dead. The new you is alive.

And Jesus is leading every step of the way.

So stop attempting to carry what was buried.

When you truly understand that your old self is dead, it changes how you climb. You're no longer just a forgiven sinner—you're a new person, alive in Christ.

He now lives in you.

His Spirit empowers your every step.

His life is now your life.

This climb isn't about striving to be better—that's how your old self survived. This journey is about something far greater: surrendering more deeply to the One who now lives within you. Victory doesn't come from trying harder, but from yielding fully to His power in you.

Your life is no longer yours.

It's Christ's.

And that's the best news imaginable—because He is stronger, wiser, and more faithful than you ever could be.

2

CHECK THE MAP

Romans 6:1-14

¹ *What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?* ² *By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?*

³ *Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?* ⁴ *We were*

therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—⁷ because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. ¹⁰ The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

¹¹ In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. ¹³ Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. ¹⁴ For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

3

TRAIL REFLECTIONS

1. Do you truly believe your old self has been crucified with Christ—or are you still trying to “clean it up”?

2. What would it look like to live from the truth that Christ lives in you today?

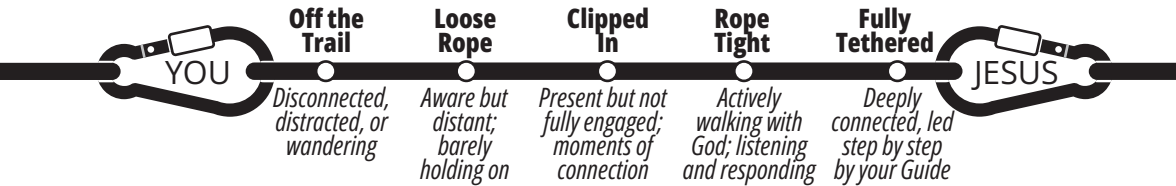
3. What areas of your life need to reflect the reality that your old self is dead and Christ now leads your steps?

4 ROPE CHECK

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

Communication & Speech

- The words I speak to others
- How I handle criticism or correction
- Gossip, slander, or complaining
- Speaking truth in love
- Knowing when to speak—and when to stay silent



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

12

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05 Camp 5 - The Death Zone
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ADOPTED INTO THE EXPEDITION



YOU BELONG TO THE TEAM—GOD'S FAMILY

You've seen climbers go solo.

Rugged individuals, isolated and self-reliant, determined to prove they can make it alone.

But real expeditions—especially the ones that reach the summit—don't look like that.

They look like a team.

A unified group, moving with purpose.

Helping each other over rocks and crevasses.

Laughing, crying, encouraging, and pressing forward—together.

And that's exactly what God has called you into.

When you were saved, you weren't just rescued—you *were adopted*.

You weren't just invited on a mission—you were welcomed into a family.

"In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will." —Ephesians 1:4b-5

From the very beginning, God wanted you.

Before you ever took a step toward Him, He had already chosen you—not out of obligation, but out of love.

He didn't just forgive your sins. He brought you home. You were chosen, loved, adopted.

He gave you a new name.

A place at His table.

A permanent place on His team.

You are now a son or daughter of the King.

You are not a guest. Not a volunteer. Not a temp.

You belong.

Some climbers wrestle with a quiet insecurity, wondering if they even belong on the mountain. They glance at others and think, "I'm not strong enough. I don't know enough. I shouldn't be here." The truth is—they're right. None of us deserve to belong. But that's the beauty of grace.

We belong because of Jesus. On the cross, He paid the full price for our adoption into God's family. And adoption? It's never been about earning. It's about the Father's desire and the Son's sacrifice that made a way for us to be called His.

"He predestined us for adoption... in accordance with his pleasure and will." —Ephesians 1:5

Let that sink in for a moment. Meditate on that truth—you are an adopted child of God.

You bring joy to your Father.

He wanted you in this family.

He pursued you, saved you, and gave you full rights as His child.

That means you're never climbing alone.

You've been adopted into a team that spans centuries and continents—a family made up of saints and sinners, prophets and fishermen, tax collectors and teachers, farmers and martyrs. And now—you.

So walk with confidence—because you belong. Not just on the mountain, but everywhere you go: at work, at school, at home, and in every moment of your day. You've been adopted by the King, and that makes every space you enter a place where you carry His presence. So live like it.

When you know who your Father is, and you know the team you're on, you climb differently.

You stop competing and start cooperating.

You stop hiding and start trusting.

You stop doubting and start walking in the confidence of someone who's been chosen, called, and equipped.

Your worth isn't measured by your performance.

It's rooted in your position: adopted by God, fully accepted in Christ.

2

CHECK THE MAP

Ephesians 1:3-14

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴ For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. ⁷ In him

we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace⁸ that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding,⁹ he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ,¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

¹¹ In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,¹² in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

3

TRAIL REFLECTIONS

1. How deeply do you believe that you've been adopted into God's family, and what thoughts or feelings still make you feel like an outsider at times?

2. What needs to change in how you live—at school, at work, at home, Online, or in your free time—so that your life reflects the truth that you've been adopted into God's family and carry His presence wherever you go?

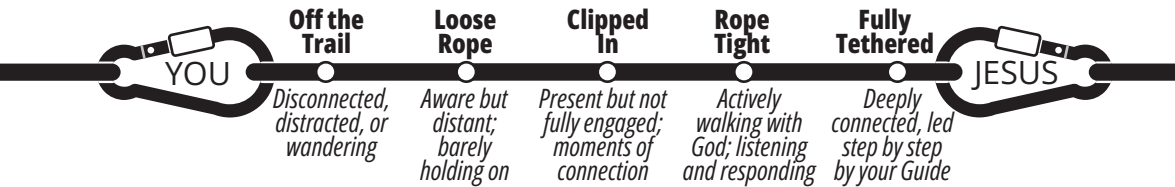
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ROPE CHECK

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

Technology & Media

- Social media use
- Internet and entertainment choices
- Screen time boundaries
- Responding to news and cultural pressure
- Protecting purity in Online spaces



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

13

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ON BELAY - JESUS HOLDS THE ROPE

1 YOU'RE JUSTIFIED & SECURE BECAUSE HE IS YOUR ANCHOR

As the trail gets steeper, and the winds stronger, one question becomes more important than ever:

Is my rope secure?

In mountaineering, your safety depends on what—and who—your rope is tied to.

When conditions get dangerous, when your footing slips, when the climb is treacherous, one thing keeps you from falling to your death: your anchor.

In climbing, there's one phrase that means everything:

"On belay."

It's a declaration that your rope is secure. That someone is holding you. Watching. Ready. It means you can climb with confidence because you're anchored to someone who won't let go.

In climbing, the belayer manages the rope to protect the climber from falling. They control slack, catch falls, and provide tension as the climber ascends or descends. The partnership between climber and belayer is built on trust, communication, and attentiveness.

Spiritually speaking, when you trusted Jesus, you clipped into the only One strong enough to hold you forever. You're on belay—not with a human partner, but with the Son of God Himself.

Our Anchor is worthy. Our Anchor is righteous—and you're tied to Him.

"It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption." —1 Corinthians 1:30

Let that sink in: Jesus didn't just model righteousness—He is your righteousness. When God looks at you, He sees His Son's perfection credited to your account.

This is what the Bible calls *justification*—the moment God declares you "*not guilty*" and fully accepted because of Christ. You are "on belay"

to His worthiness, not yours.

Since He holds the rope, it brings up an important question: who is Jesus, really?

It's not enough to call Jesus a wise teacher or a noble example—He is infinitely more. And thank God for that. A good person might be trustworthy enough to hold your rope on a rock wall, but only Jesus is strong enough to anchor your soul for the climb of life. How do we know He is worthy? Because we know He is God.

“In Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.” —Colossians 2:9

Jesus is 100% God in human flesh.

He didn't become divine—He is divine.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.” —John 1:1-3

He wasn't created—He's the Creator.

Jesus didn't just reflect God like a mirror—He revealed God in human flesh. He is the visible expression of the invisible God, showing the world exactly who God is—His thoughts, His desires, and His heart for us.

And when He lived a sinless life, died in our place, and rose again, He secured eternal righteousness for all who are tied to Him by faith.

You're not trusting in a teacher.

You're trusting in God Himself, who descended the mountain to rescue you.

That means your rope is secure.

Some days, you may feel weak. You may stumble. Slip. Even fall. But your security doesn't come from your grip on Jesus—it comes from His grip on you.

He is the anchor.

He is the righteousness.

He is the reason you're justified.

That means no condemnation.

No fear of falling.

No striving to earn what has already been finished.

You are rope-tied to Christ—and He cannot fail.

2**CHECK THE MAP**

Colossians 2:6–15

⁶ So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.

⁹ For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, ¹⁰ and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority.

¹¹ In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ, ¹² having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

¹³ When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴ having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

3**TRAIL REFLECTIONS**

1. What are you relying on to make yourself “right” before God—your efforts or Christ’s righteousness?

2. Do you believe your standing with God is fully secure in Jesus, even when you fall short?

3. How does knowing that Jesus is fully God—and your righteousness—give you peace and confidence?

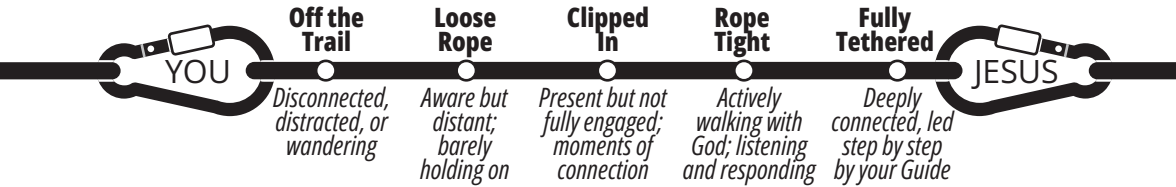
4. Are you living like someone justified, or are you still trying to earn what has already been secured?

4 ROPE CHECK

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

Money & Stewardship

- Tithing and generosity
- Trusting God as Provider
- Avoiding materialism or greed
- Saving, giving, and spending with purpose
- Financial integrity



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

14

01 Base Camp - The Call to Climb
02 Camp 2 - Salvation & Identity
03 Camp 3 - The Flesh Within
04 Camp 4 - Ascent Power
05 Camp 5 - The Death Zone
06 The Summit - Living for The Cause



REFLECTION & REST - GRATITUDE

1

CELEBRATE HOW FAR GRACE HAS BROUGHT YOU

You've come a long way.

From the moment the rope of salvation was thrown down, to the weight of sin lifted off your back, to the breathtaking truth that you are adopted, justified, and secured in Christ—this week has been a climb fueled by grace.

And now, before the next steps of the journey, it's time to pause.

To rest. To breathe. To look back and say: "Thank You, Jesus."

Because you didn't get here by your own strength.

You're here because grace brought you this far—and it will carry you the rest of the way.

Rest is part of the climb.

In every serious expedition, rest isn't a detour. It's a discipline. Without it, strength fades. Focus drifts. The heart forgets why it's climbing in the first place.

So today, stop striving.

Don't plan or push.

Just sit with the truth that's carried you this week: You are safe, secure, and deeply loved—not because of what you've done, but because of who Jesus is.

He's the one holding the belay rope.

Look back. Give thanks. Look forward.

Use this time to reflect on the journey so far.

Revisit your notes, journal entries, or favorite verses from the week.

Celebrate the grace of God in your story—not just what He's taught you, but what He's done in you.

Ask yourself:

Where did I begin this week spiritually—and where am I now?

What truth about God's grace and my identity has sunk deeper into my heart?

What weight did I lay down? What confidence have I gained?

Then, thank Him. For rescuing you. For forgiving you. For calling

you family.

For holding your rope every step of the way.

2

CHECK THE MAP

Psalm 103

Of David

- ¹ *Praise the LORD, my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.*
- ² *Praise the LORD, my soul,
and forget not all his benefits—*
- ³ *who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,*
- ⁴ *who redeems your life from the pit
and crowns you with love and compassion,*
- ⁵ *who satisfies your desires with good things
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.*
- ⁶ *The LORD works righteousness
and justice for all the oppressed.*
- ⁷ *He made known his ways to Moses,
his deeds to the people of Israel:*
- ⁸ *The LORD is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in love.*
- ⁹ *He will not always accuse,
nor will he harbor his anger forever;*
- ¹⁰ *he does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.*
- ¹¹ *For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his love for those who fear him;*
- ¹² *as far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions from us.*
- ¹³ *As a father has compassion on his children,
so the LORD has compassion on those who fear
him;*
- ¹⁴ *for he knows how we are formed,
he remembers that we are dust.*
- ¹⁵ *The life of mortals is like grass,
they flourish like a flower of the field;*
- ¹⁶ *the wind blows over it and it is gone,
and its place remembers it no more.*
- ¹⁷ *But from everlasting to everlasting*

*the LORD's love is with those who fear him,
and his righteousness with their children's
children—*

¹⁸ *with those who keep his covenant
and remember to obey his precepts.*

¹⁹ *The LORD has established his throne in heaven,
and his kingdom rules over all.*

²⁰ *Praise the LORD, you his angels,
you mighty ones who do his bidding,
who obey his word.*

²¹ *Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts,
you his servants who do his will.*

²² *Praise the LORD, all his works
everywhere in his dominion.
Praise the LORD, my soul.*

3

CLIMB REFLECTIONS

Take a few moments today to write a gratitude letter to Jesus. It doesn't need to be polished—just honest.

Tell Him where you were...

Where you are now...

And what His grace has meant to you in the climb.

Continue in prayer, in your words, along these lines:

Jesus, thank You for Your grace—grace that saved me, lifted me, secured me, and brought me this far. Thank You for being the One who holds my rope, anchors my hope, and calls me Your own. Help me to rest today not in what I've accomplished, but in what You've already finished. And give me joy as I look ahead, knowing that You'll never leave my side.
Amen.

Week 3

BASECAMP BRIEFING

Don't climb alone. Meet weekly with a spiritual coach—someone farther along in the journey. Use questions from each section of this talk sheet to reflect, pray, and grow together.

GEAR CHECK

1

1. How has your understanding of salvation grown or changed this week?
2. **Do you believe your identity in Christ is secure—or do you still wrestle with doubt?**
3. What part of your spiritual “gear” (habits, mindset, theology) needs upgrading?
4. What’s one truth about your new identity that you want to hold onto this week?

WEATHER REPORT

2

1. **What was the climate of your life this week (circle one)?**



TRAIL CONDITIONS

3

1. What day’s devotion related to your week most—and why?
2. Did any topic feel confusing or uncomfortable (justified, adopted, etc.)?
3. How did this week challenge your view of yourself or your past?
4. **Did you experience any spiritual “aha” moments about your standing with God?**

CLIFFSIDE MOMENTS

4

1. Where did you struggle to believe or live out your identity in Christ this week?
2. **What old voices of shame or insecurity try to climb back in?**
3. How did you respond in a moment of temptation, fear, or discouragement?
4. Was there a moment this week where you sensed God affirming your identity?

SUMMIT GLIMPSES

5

1. **What Scripture spoke loudest to you about your salvation or new identity?**
2. How did that verse shift the way you see yourself—or your relationship with God?
3. Did you have any moments of joy, peace, or freedom while reflecting on His truth?
4. What vision of your future in Christ became clearer this week?

KNOTS AND TANGLES

6

1. How do you struggle to accept that you're fully forgiven—or fully loved?
2. What part of your old identity are you still tempted to cling to?
3. Do you feel worthy to be used by God? Why or why not?
4. **What questions or doubts came up this week that you'd like to talk through?**

MAP & COMPASS

7

1. **Were you able to memorize this week's Trail Marker?**
2. How did the verse help shape your thinking throughout the week?
3. How did it give you a new way to speak truth over your life when you felt weak?
4. How could you use this verse to encourage someone else?

ROUTE PLANNING

8

1. What's one way you can walk in your new identity this week?
2. **Is God prompting you to speak, serve, or live differently because of who you are in Christ?**
3. What action would reflect your trust in His grace, not your past mistakes?
4. How will you remind yourself daily that you're adopted, justified, and secure?

PRAYER AROUND THE FIRE

9

1. **Write down each other's prayer requests and pray.**

Week 3

CAMP 3: THE FLESH WITHIN

TRAIL MARKER—A guiding memory verse to mark your path this week.

GALATIANS 5:17

For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.



CAMP 3
The Flesh Within



“Climbing is not a battle with the elements, nor against the law of gravity. It’s a battle against oneself.”

—Walter Bonatti

Italian mountaineer, explorer, and author

15

01 Base Camp - The Call to Climb
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THE HIDDEN AVALANCHE - WHAT IS THE FLESH?

1 LEARN THE DANGERS BEFORE THEY CATCH YOU

The sky is clear. The trail is quiet. You're climbing steady and strong. Then suddenly, without warning—an avalanche.

Not from above...but from within.

A small shift beneath the surface. A hidden weakness. A crack you didn't see. And in a moment, everything threatens to collapse.

Living in Southwestern Colorado, I've learned to respect the mountain in more ways than one.

Not far from where I live is *the Million Dollar Highway*—a breathtaking stretch of road carved through steep cliffs and high passes. It's beautiful, but dangerous. Especially in the winter.

Avalanches are a constant threat.

So much so that avalanche patrols preemptively launch explosives to intentionally trigger small slides—controlled danger to prevent disaster.

And every year, despite the warnings, backcountry skiers are killed because they're caught off guard by hidden weaknesses in the snowpack.

It always starts the same way: everything looks calm. The air is still. The trail is quiet. And then, without warning, the slope gives way—and everything collapses.

That's how the flesh works in the life of a disciple.

It's not always loud, visible, or obvious.

It's the hidden danger inside—the part of you that still resists God, even after you've been saved.

In Scripture, the word “flesh” often points to our old, sinful nature—the self-focused, desire-driven part of us that still craves control.

Yes, your old self was crucified with Christ (Romans 6:6), but the habits it formed, the lies it believed, and the cravings it fed don't vanish instantly.

They linger.

They whisper.

They tempt you to pick up what Jesus already nailed to the cross.

The flesh whisper, “Do your own thing. Live for yourself. Chase what

feels good. Take your own path.”

That’s the voice of the flesh—echoes of our old sinful nature, inherited from Adam and shaped by the fall. Though we’ve been forgiven and redeemed, those patterns still linger, pulling at our hearts. The flesh wages war within us, tempting us to choose self over surrender, pleasure over purpose, and comfort over calling. It’s that inner tug that draws even redeemed believers toward worldly shortcuts instead of God’s glory.

The flesh doesn’t want to surrender. It wants to survive.

It has one goal: self-preservation.

Your flesh will do anything to protect your ego, your comfort, your control, and your pride.

In fact, much of what we call “the fight or flight response” or “survival instinct” in life can actually be just the flesh talking—lessons the world teaches us about how to protect ourselves without needing God.

Which is why the New Testament spends so much time urging us to walk by the Spirit instead of the flesh.

Because the flesh?

It’s a horrible climbing guide that always leads you off-route—and often straight off a cliff.

When you’re following the flesh as your climbing guide, it becomes painfully obvious where it leads.

Galatians 5 spells it out:

“The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like.” —Galatians 5:19–21a

The flesh always promises a shortcut to the summit—but delivers an avalanche of shame.

The flesh promises control but delivers chaos. Its path may look appealing, but it always leads to the same destination as sin—death.

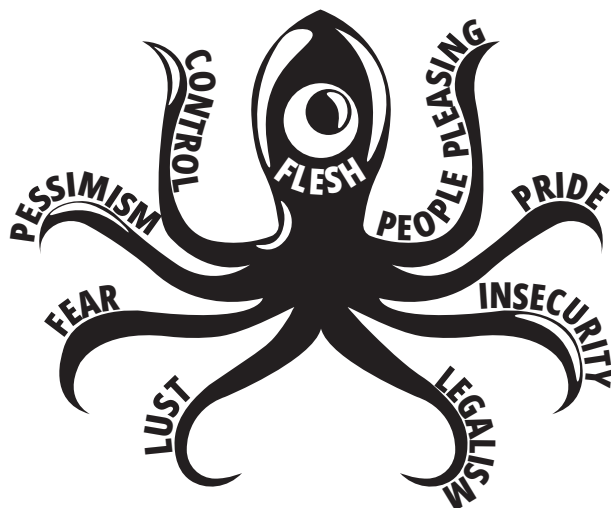
While we are fully forgiven and secure in Christ, choosing to live according to the flesh invites the shadow of death into our lives. It’s not eternal separation, but it is real loss—the death of joy, the erosion of integrity, and the breakdown of relationships.

The flesh offers life on your terms, but in the end, it always takes more than it gives. That’s why the Apostle Paul wrote:

“For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.” —Romans 8:6

Let me borrow an illustration from *Exchanged Life Ministries**—a powerful metaphor that brings the flesh into vivid focus. They describe the flesh as a slimy octopus living inside of us. Each tentacle represents a different sinful tendency—control, pride, fear, lust, anger, people-pleasing, insecurity, and so on. Some tentacles are obvious, others are more subtle. But all of them reach out to influence our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors—especially when we’re tired, wounded, or feeling out of control.

Here’s the problem: we often spend our energy trying to chop off a tentacle or two. We manage our behavior, modify our actions, and call it



spiritual progress. But the issue isn’t just the tentacles—it’s the octopus itself. The flesh doesn’t need to be tamed. It needs to be crucified.

The good news? The Spirit doesn’t just help us behave better.

He replaces the influence of the flesh with the life of Christ.

So today, stop trying to manage the tentacles.

Ask the Spirit to put the flesh to death at the root.

Let Him lead your climb—not the slimy, self-serving octopus of the flesh.

Because only one guide can get you to the summit—and it’s not the flesh. It’s the Spirit of God living in you.

* The Flesh Octopus concept is adapted from *the Association of Exchanged Life Ministries*, and *the GraceLife Workshop*, Greenwood Village, Colorado, www.elmco.org.

Romans 8:1-17

¹ Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. ³ For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

⁵ Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶ The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸ Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

⁹ You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. ¹¹ And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

¹² Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

¹⁴ For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. ¹⁵ The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶ The Spirit himself

testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. ¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

3 TRAIL REFLECTIONS

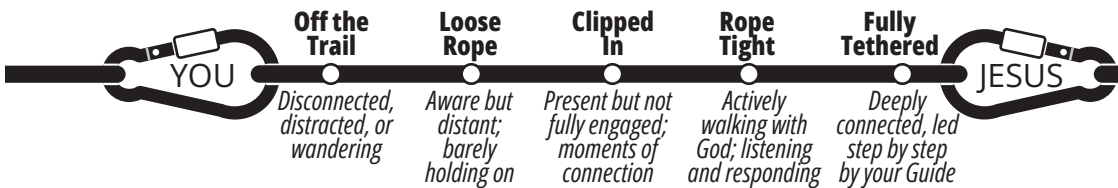
1. Where have you trusted the flesh as your guide, and where did that path lead you?

4 ROPE CHECK

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

Waiting & Uncertainty

- Trusting God's timing
- Responding to closed doors
- Surrendering unmet expectations
- Praying persistently without losing hope
- Choosing faith when answers don't come quickly



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

16

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REBELLION IN THE WILDERNESS

1

THE FLESH LEADS YOU AWAY FROM THE GUIDE

The mountain isn't always the hardest part of the journey—sometimes it's the wilderness between base camp and the climb. It's the stretch of dry, uncertain terrain where everything feels disorienting, progress feels slow, and God's presence feels distant.

It's in the wilderness that your flesh starts whispering louder:

"This isn't working."

"God's holding out on you."

"You were better off before."

Sound familiar?

It should.

It's the same rebellion the Israelites fell into in their wilderness journey after God rescued them from Egypt.

God had just delivered Israel with miracle after miracle. He parted the Red Sea, defeated Pharaoh, and set His people free. But when the journey got hard—when the food ran short or the water dried up—their hearts turned.

They grumbled.

They doubted.

They rebelled against their Guide.

And the author of the book of Hebrews gleans a lesson from their mutiny.

"Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." —Hebrews 3:15

The New Testament calls us to remember their story—not as a history lesson, but as a warning.

Because our flesh does the same thing. It resists the Spirit. It second-guesses God. It whispers, "Go back. Turn around. You don't need a Guide—you can lead yourself."

The wilderness exposes whether we truly trust God—or just the comfort He provides.

The Israelites didn't stop believing God existed.

They just stopped trusting His leadership.

They refused to follow the Guide.

And that's exactly what the flesh wants to produce in us—a quiet, subtle rebellion that says, "I'll take it from here."

That's why Paul wrote to the church at Galatia:

For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. —Galatians 5:17

The flesh will always try to pull you off the path. It lures you away from the Guide who knows the way. It clouds your vision and makes you forget the ultimate destination—being drawn into the summit of God's loving presence.

So don't harden your heart. Don't tune Him out.

Listen to His voice. He's calling you upward.

The wilderness doesn't have to lead to rebellion.

It can lead to dependence—if you let it.

Every dry place is an invitation to listen more closely. To follow more fully. To trust your Guide even when the path feels unclear. Because unlike the flesh, Jesus never leads you astray.

His Spirit speaks—not to control you, but to guide you back into life.

"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me." —John 10:27

The question isn't whether the Lord is speaking.

It's who you are listening to.

2

CHECK THE MAP

Hebrews 3

¹ Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest. ² He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house. ³ Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. ⁴ For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. ⁵ "Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house," a bearing witness to what would be spoken by God in the future. ⁶ But Christ is faithful as the Son over God's house. And we are his house, if indeed we hold

firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory.

⁷ So, as the Holy Spirit says:

“Today, if you hear his voice,

⁸ *do not harden your hearts*

as you did in the rebellion,

during the time of testing in the wilderness,

⁹ *where your ancestors tested and tried me,*

though for forty years they saw what I did.

¹⁰ *That is why I was angry with that generation;*

I said, ‘Their hearts are always going astray,

and they have not known my ways.’

¹¹ *So I declared on oath in my anger,*

‘They shall never enter my rest.’”

¹² *See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.* ¹³ *But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.* ¹⁴ *We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end.* ¹⁵ *As has just been said:*

“Today, if you hear his voice,

do not harden your hearts

as you did in the rebellion.”

¹⁶ *Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt?* ¹⁷ *And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies perished in the wilderness?* ¹⁸ *And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed?* ¹⁹ *So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.*

3

TRAIL REFLECTIONS

1. What wilderness are you currently walking through? How is your flesh tempting you to respond?
2. Have you noticed any grumbling, entitlement, or resistance to God’s leadership in this season?

3. What would it look like to listen and follow your Guide today—even if the path feels hard or unclear?

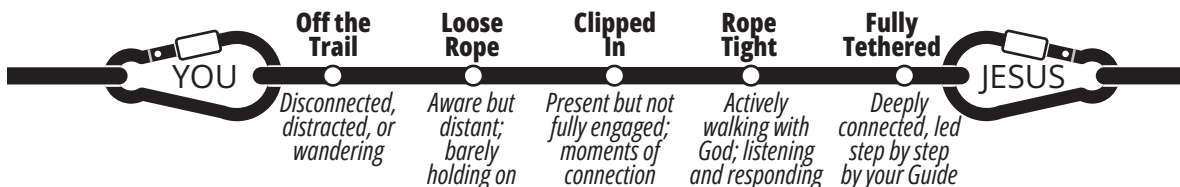
4. How is the Spirit inviting you to respond differently than your flesh wants to?

4 ROPE CHECK

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

Home Life & Family

- Spiritual leadership in the home
- Showing Christ in how I treat family
- Prioritizing time with loved ones
- Creating a home of peace and grace
- Being present, not just physically but emotionally



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

17

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SURVIVAL MODE ISN'T SUMMIT LIVING

1

GOD WANTS TRANSFORMATION, NOT JUST SURVIVAL

You stop thinking about progress or purpose—you just want to get through it.

In the climbing world, they call it survival mode—when your goal shifts from reaching the summit to simply not falling off the mountain.

And spiritually, many Christians live in that exact place.

You're not walking in joy—you're just avoiding collapse. You're not growing in Christ—you're just managing sin. You're not living free—you're living guarded, exhausted, and barely holding on.

Jesus didn't save you just to help you survive. He saved you to transform you.

This brings out a significant difference between the flesh and the Spirit. The flesh teaches you to cope. The Spirit calls you to change.

The flesh always operates in survival mode. It says things like:

- “Just get through this.”
- “Numb the pain.”
- “Don't let anyone see you're struggling.”
- “Do whatever you need to stay safe.”

And it makes perfect sense—because, as we've said, the flesh's top priority is self-preservation. But Jesus didn't come to improve your old self. He came to put it to death. Because the goal of Christianity isn't comfort, safety, or image control.

The goal is *transformation*—and that only happens when you stop living in survival mode and start walking in surrender.

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind...” —Romans 12:2

God isn't just trying to help you cope

Let's be clear: God sees your pain. God didn't promise to take away difficult seasons of life. Instead, He promised to walk with you through trauma, hardship, and exhaustion.

But He doesn't stop there.

The Holy Spirit wasn't given just to comfort you in brokenness—but to rebuild you into something brand new. He wants to renew your mind. Heal the wounds beneath the coping mechanisms. And lead you out of patterns of fear, self-protection, addiction, and emotional isolation.

Survival is where the flesh lives.

Transformation is where the Spirit leads.

You weren't created just to survive the wilderness. You were made to climb—to grow, to be changed, to experience the beauty of life with God at new altitudes.

But you can't reach the summit while clinging to survival mode.

You have to let the Spirit rewire your thinking.

You have to trust that He's not just trying to get you through life—He's leading you to something greater—to the summit.

Let today be the day you stop coping and start climbing again.

2

CHECK THE MAP

Romans 11:33-36

³³ *Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!*

How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!

³⁴ *“Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?”*

³⁵ *“Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them?”*

³⁶ *For from him and through him and for him are all things.*

To him be the glory forever! Amen.

Romans 12:1-2

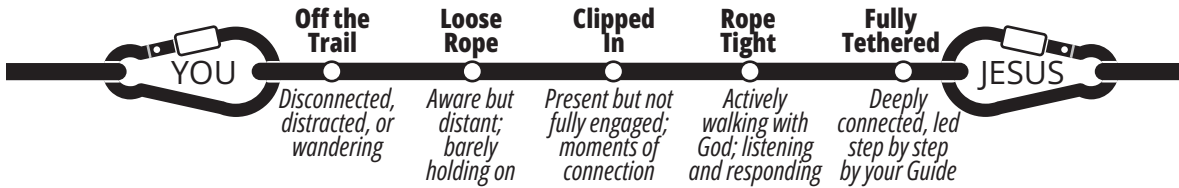
¹ *Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.* ² *Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

4 ROPE CHECK

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

Loneliness, Isolation, & Inner Battles

- When no one sees me—who am I?
- Trusting God when I feel forgotten
- Staying grounded when I feel spiritually dry
- Guarding against bitterness
- Fighting comparison and jealousy



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

18

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OLD HABITS DIE ON THE TRAIL

1

FLESH CANNOT BE USED TO OVERCOME FLESH

There's something every climber learns the hard way: *your old instincts won't help you at high elevation.*

What worked at the bottom of the trail doesn't work higher up. In fact, old reflexes—like grabbing a loose rock or leaning back too far—can be deadly on the side of a steep slope. They have to be retrained. Because what once felt natural is now dangerous.

The same is true in the life of a disciple.

The flesh trained you how to survive—through fear, pride, control, and self-reliance. But on the mountain of life, those instincts will only lead you into trouble.

Old habits die on the trail. But only if you let the Spirit retrain you.

When we realize a sinful pattern is harming us—or others—our first instinct is usually to fix it through *willpower*.

We try harder.

Make stricter rules.

Put on a better face.

And sometimes, it even looks like it's working—for a little while.

But here's the hard truth:

You can't use the flesh to overcome the flesh.

“Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?” —Galatians 3:3

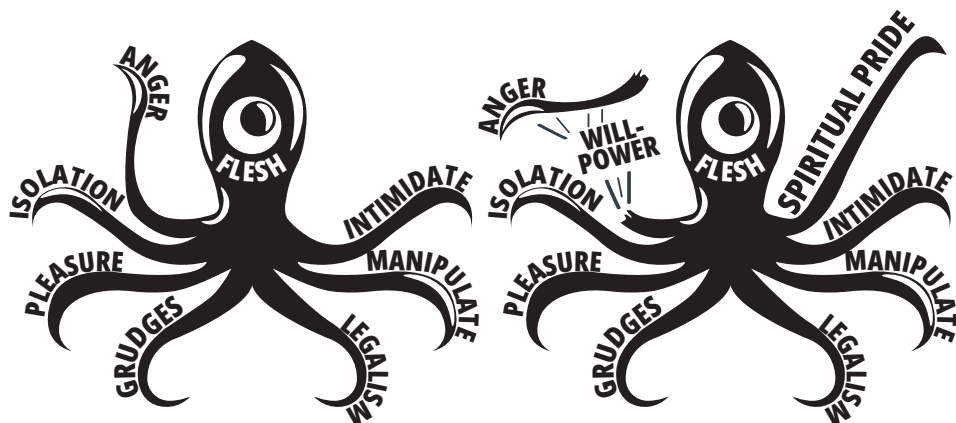
Using willpower alone to overcome sin may look spiritual, but if it's rooted in self-effort, it's just a cleaned-up version of the same problem. The flesh can dress itself up in religious effort, but underneath, it's still the same self-driven system of pride and self-preservation.

Remember the slimy octopus from the *Exchanged Life Ministries*?* The flesh is like that creature inside you, with multiple arms—each one representing a sinful tendency: fear, performance, anger, insecurity, pride, lust, control.

* The Flesh Octopus concept is adapted from *the Association of Exchanged Life Ministries*, and *the GraceLife Workshop*, Greenwood Village, Colorado, www.elmco.org.

Here's the danger:

You might think you've conquered the flesh when you finally manage to cut off one of its arms—but do it in your own strength, and another one grows back even stronger. You grit your teeth and finally stop lashing out in anger—victory, right? But then a new tentacle wraps around your



heart: spiritual pride. Suddenly, you feel superior to those still battling their tempers, and without even realizing it, you've traded one form of the flesh for another. *That's the danger of willpower—it reshapes the flesh instead of killing it.* You defeat one addiction—but now you're obsessed with managing your image because you must keep up the facade of righteous superiority.

It's still the same octopus—just wearing a different face.

And guess what? That new arm—*pride*—can be even more deceptive than the first.

The goal of discipleship isn't to get better at self-discipline. It's to learn daily dependence on the Holy Spirit because only the Holy Spirit can kill the octopus

The Spirit doesn't ask you to perform—He invites you to surrender. He doesn't give you a new set of rules—He gives you a new heart. He doesn't strengthen the flesh—***He puts it to death.***

“If by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.” —Romans 8:13

Victory over the flesh doesn't come from trying harder. It comes from trusting deeper.

Back to our mountain climbing metaphor—ask yourself: *What needs to die on the trail of discipleship?*

Every step with Jesus requires letting go of old reflexes. The path forward is narrow. And the higher you go, the more dangerous it becomes to lean on the flesh—even in subtle ways. Your old strategies, self-made fixes, and white-knuckled willpower might feel strong at lower elevations, but they won't hold your weight up here.

You can't muscle your way to the summit.

Your willpower isn't your lifeline—the Holy Spirit is.

And here's the irony: one of the very things we often try to achieve through willpower—self-control—is actually a fruit of the Spirit.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is... self-control.” —Galatians 5:22–23

That means true self-control isn't something you grind out by effort. It's something that grows in you as you walk in dependence on the Spirit.

It's not about straining harder—it's about surrendering deeper.

So let Him retrain you.

Let Him transform you.

Let the old habits—and your flesh-driven willpower—die on the trail. Because freedom doesn't come from controlling yourself better—it comes from trusting the One who lives in you.

Let the Spirit lead. He's strong enough to carry you.

2

CHECK THE MAP

Galatians 3:1-14

¹ You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. ² I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? ³ Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh? ⁴ Have you experienced so much in vain—if it really was in vain? ⁵ So again I ask, does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard? ⁶ So also Abraham “believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

⁷ Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham. ⁸ Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through

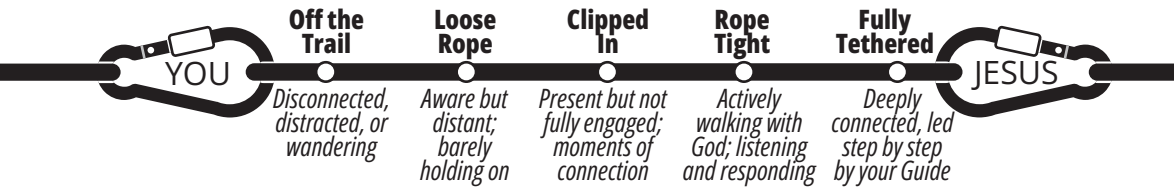
4

ROPE CHECK

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

Spiritual Warfare & Temptation

- Recognizing lies from the enemy
- Standing firm in times of testing
- Putting on the armor of God
- Taking thoughts captive
- Resisting sin through the Spirit, not willpower



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

19

01 Base Camp - The Call to Climb
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CRACKS IN THE ROCKFACE

1 FEAR, PRIDE, AND ANGER WILL WEAKEN YOUR FOOTING

If you've ever done serious climbing, you know that not all rock is as solid as it looks. It may seem firm under your feet—until the moment it crumbles.

You slip.

Your heart races.

And suddenly, the only thing that matters is whether you're anchored to something that won't give way.

That's why climbers constantly test their holds and check for cracks in the rockface—hidden weaknesses that can turn a confident ascent into a dangerous fall.

In the spiritual life, those cracks often have names:

Fear. Pride. Anger. Lust.

They're not always obvious.

They can hide under the surface—camouflaged by busyness, religious activity, or even personality. But left unchecked, these inner fractures will weaken your footing and invite a fall.

Fear Makes You Freeze or Flee

Fear keeps you stuck—or drives you to run.

It might show up as anxiety about the future, fear of rejection, fear of failure, or fear of surrender. But it always whispers the same lie: "You're not safe. God can't be trusted."

And when you believe that, you stop following the Guide.

You hesitate. You hide. You compromise.

Fear keeps you stuck—or drives you to run.

Sometimes it paralyzes you right where you are, afraid to take the next step. Other times, it sends you scrambling in the wrong direction, desperate for control.

And when that lie takes root, everything changes.

You stop listening to the Guide.

You hesitate instead of obeying.

You hide instead of moving forward.

You compromise instead of trusting His way.

Fear doesn't just slow your climb—it turns you around. It trades the security of the rope for the illusion of control. But the truth is, you're never safer than when you're fully surrendered to the One leading the way.

Pride Makes You Overconfident

Pride whispers, “*You’ve got this.*”

It cheers, “*You are enough.*”

But it's a lie dressed as confidence. You stop depending on the Spirit. You start thinking you're above the struggle. You begin comparing, criticizing, and climbing solo.

Pride is deceptive. It makes you feel strong right before the handhold breaks loose and you fall.

So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! —1 Corinthians 10:12

Pride is one of the most dangerous cracks in the rockface—because it disguises itself as strength. It convinces you to rely on yourself—your strength, your resolve, your grit.

It sounds empowering, but it subtly pulls your hand off the rope and away from the Guide. And at high elevation, self-reliance is deadly.

Never forget that you weren't made to climb alone.

You weren't meant to be “enough” without Him.

True strength is found in surrender.

Anger Makes You Reckless

Anger doesn't just explode—it simmers.

It's often called a *secondary emotion*—because we're never just angry. Anger is almost always a response to something deeper.

- We're afraid, so we protect ourselves by getting angry.
- We feel insecure, so we take control by yelling and demanding.
- We feel hurt or overlooked, so we lash out to be heard or noticed.

Sometimes that anger comes out loud and fierce. Other times, it simmers in silence—resentment, bitterness, irritability, or a constant low-grade frustration with people or even with God.

But no matter how it shows up, if we ignore the deeper wounds behind it, that anger will begin to take over. It makes you careless, reactive, and impulsive.

It erodes your patience.

It hardens your heart.

And it shatters the unity and trust you need to climb with others.

On the mountain, anger is dangerous. You're not climbing solo—you're roped together. And when anger flares up, it's not just your footing that's at risk—it can take others down with you.

So don't just silence your anger—trace it to its source. Let the Spirit uncover what's really going on beneath the surface. And let the Guide do what only He can: bring healing to the wounds behind the fire.

Lust Makes You Vulnerable

Another major crack that can compromise your footing—and bring even seasoned climbers crashing down—is lust.

Lust doesn't begin with a scandal.

It starts small—an unchecked glance, a late-night scroll, a fantasy indulged instead of resisted. It promises thrill, escape, or control. It lies, saying, *"This is harmless... just once... no one will know."*

But here's the truth:

Lust always takes you farther than you wanted to go, faster than you expected, and costs more than you thought it would.

It's one of the most destructive cracks in the rockface of a believer's life.

Sexual sin has ruined marriages. Split churches. Crushed callings. Broken trust.

It has left children wounded, communities shaken, and leaders disqualified.

Why?

Because lust deceives the heart into trading the eternal for the immediate. And the flesh is relentless in its pursuit to justify it:

- "You deserve this."
- "You're already too far in."
- "You can stop whenever you want."

But it's a trap.

And the longer you wait to expose it, the deeper the crack grows—and the greater the fall.

The flesh is a hidden threat on the climb of discipleship—because it slips into every crack and crevice of our lives. Fear, pride, anger, and lust aren't just passing emotions; they're some of the most dangerous expressions of our sinful nature. These four have derailed more believers than we can count. Each one, in its own way, has caused people to stumble off the path, fall hard, and even flee from God altogether.

They rise up when we feel unsafe, out of control, or exposed.

They keep us living in self-protection rather than Spirit-dependence.

And just like small cracks in the rock, they might not cause a fall right away. But the higher you climb, the more dangerous they become.

You don't have to climb in fear, pride, or anger. The Holy Spirit sees every crack—and He knows how to fill them with truth, humility, peace, and courage. So let the Spirit reinforce your steps

He doesn't shame you for having weak spots.

He strengthens them.

But first, you have to stop pretending the cracks aren't there.

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.” —Psalm 139:23

Ask the Spirit to expose our secret attractions.

To humble what's proud.

To soften what's angry.

And to speak peace over what's afraid.

Let Him reinforce your footing before the fall comes.

2

CHECK THE MAP

Psalm 51

For the director of music. A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.

¹ *Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.*

² *Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.*

³ *For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.*

⁴ *Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are right in your verdict
and justified when you judge.*

⁵ *Surely I was sinful at birth,
sinful from the time my mother conceived me.*

⁶ *Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb;
you taught me wisdom in that secret place.*

⁷ *Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.*

⁸ *Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.*

⁹ *Hide your face from my sins
and blot out all my iniquity.*

¹⁰ *Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*

¹¹ *Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.*

¹² *Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.*

¹³ *Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
so that sinners will turn back to you.*

¹⁴ *Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God,
you who are God my Savior,
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.*

¹⁵ *Open my lips, Lord,
and my mouth will declare your praise.*

¹⁶ *You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring
it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.*

¹⁷ *My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart
you, God, will not despise.*

¹⁸ *May it please you to prosper Zion,
to build up the walls of Jerusalem.*

¹⁹ *Then you will delight in the sacrifices of the
righteous, in burnt offerings offered whole;
then bulls will be offered on your altar.*

3

TRAIL REFLECTIONS

1. Which of these four—fear, pride, anger, or lust—most weakens your spiritual footing right now? Why?

2. How have you seen one of these cracks lead to compromise or isolation in your walk with Jesus?

3. Are you trying to manage these areas on your own, or are you truly surrendering them to the Spirit?

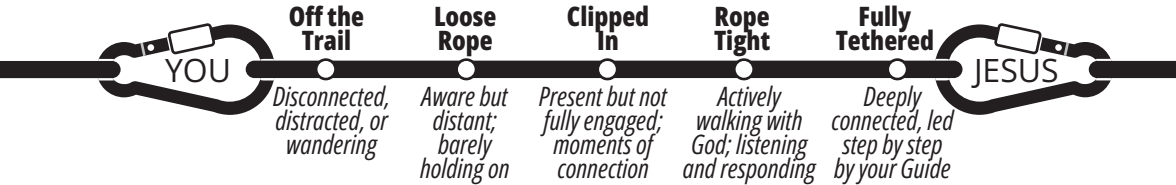
4. What specific step of confession, accountability, or spiritual dependence do you need to take today to reinforce that area?

4 ROPE CHECK

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

Growth & Calling

- Staying teachable and humble
- Saying yes to hard but holy things
- Being faithful in small things
- Walking in obedience even when it’s costly
- Seeking to grow in my spiritual gifts



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

20

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THE WAR BENEATH YOUR BOOTS

1 THE BATTLE BETWEEN FLESH AND SPIRIT IS REAL

By now, you've probably realized something unsettling: the greatest threat to your spiritual climb isn't out there—it's inside you.

All week we've talked about the dangers of the flesh—That inner nature that resists God and tries to turn you around and lead you back to the valley.

We've seen how the flesh shows up in obvious ways—lust, anger, pride—but also in more subtle patterns like self-reliance, fear, and religious performance. And we've learned the hard truth: *you can't fix the flesh with more flesh.*

There's a war under your boots—a daily, moment-by-moment battle between your old self and your new identity in Christ.

And the battlefield isn't your circumstances—*it's your desires.*

The desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh...

—Galatians 5:17

This battle explains why you can love Jesus and still feel pulled toward sin.

Why you can believe truth and still act out of fear.

Why you can want to follow God and still find yourself wandering.

The war is real. But so are the victories.

This week was about awareness. Week three wasn't meant to discourage you—*it was meant to wake you up.*

You can't fight an enemy you refuse to name. And the flesh is a deceptive enemy—one that hides in your habits, justifies itself with logic, and often sounds a lot like "common sense."

This week, *we exposed it.*

We called it what it is. And we saw what it produces when left unchecked: shame, division, death, and defeat.

But now that you've seen it—you're ready to fight it the right way.

Here's the hope: ***You don't have to fight this war alone.***

In fact, you were never meant to.

Starting next week, we shift our focus. We've studied the flesh—now we'll discover the power of the Holy Spirit.

- Who is the Spirit?
- How does He lead?
- What does it actually look like to walk by the Spirit in everyday life?

If this week was about uncovering the problem, next week is about *embracing the solution*.

You're not stuck in this battle.

You've been equipped for it.

And as you learn to walk in the Spirit, you'll find strength, freedom, and the power to climb higher than you ever could on your own.

2

CHECK THE MAP

Romans 7:14-25

¹⁴ We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. ¹⁵ I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. ¹⁶ And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷ As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. ¹⁸ For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

²¹ So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²² For in my inner being I delight in God's law; ²³ but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me.

²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

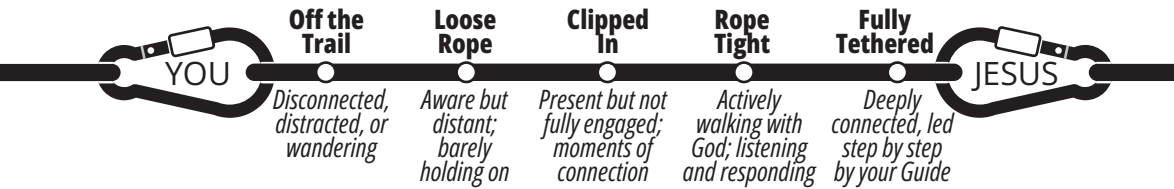
4

ROPE CHECK

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

Rhythms of Grace

- Resting in the Lord
- Silence and solitude
- Fasting and intentional spiritual practices
- Worship—not just singing, but living
- Regular confession, accountability and repentance



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

21

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REFLECTION & REST - SEARCH ME

1

WHERE ARE YOU MOST VULNERABLE TO SLIPPING?

This week, we took a hard look at one of the most dangerous forces on the mountain: *the flesh*.

We defined it for what it truly is—not just bad behavior, but our inherent sinful nature inherited from the fall. That inner drive for self-preservation. That part of us that resists God and seeks its own way.

The flesh is the survival instinct of the old self—always whispering, “*Protect yourself. You are enough. Trust yourself. Live for yourself.*”

We compared it to a slimy octopus, with long, sneaky tentacles like pride, fear, anger, lust, control, and compromise. Some tentacles are obvious. Others are subtle. But all of them reach out to weaken your footing.

And if you try to fight the flesh in your own strength, it just grows a new arm—often one wrapped in spiritual pride.

This week was about exposing the cracks beneath your boots—those pressure points where the flesh still has influence.

And now, like any wise climber, it’s time to pause.

To stop.

To breathe.

To inspect your heart and ask honestly: “*Where am I most vulnerable to slipping?*”

Not so you can fix it with more effort—but so you can invite the Holy Spirit to reinforce it with grace.

2

CHECK THE MAP

Psalm 139

For the director of music. Of David. A psalm.

¹ *You have searched me, LORD,
and you know me.*

² *You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.*

³ *You discern my going out and my lying down;*

- you are familiar with all my ways.*
- ⁴ *Before a word is on my tongue
you, LORD, know it completely.*
- ⁵ *You hem me in behind and before,
and you lay your hand upon me.*
- ⁶ *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.*
- ⁷ *Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?*
- ⁸ *If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.*
- ⁹ *If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,*
- ¹⁰ *even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.*
- ¹¹ *If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me
and the light become night around me,"*
- ¹² *even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.*
- ¹³ *For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.*
- ¹⁴ *I praise you because I am fearfully and
wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.*
- ¹⁵ *My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths of the
earth.*
- ¹⁶ *Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the days ordained for me were written in your
book before one of them came to be.*
- ¹⁷ *How precious to me are your thoughts, e God!
How vast is the sum of them!*
- ¹⁸ *Were I to count them,
they would outnumber the grains of sand—
when I awake, I am still with you.*
- ¹⁹ *If only you, God, would slay the wicked!
Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty!*
- ²⁰ *They speak of you with evil intent;*

your adversaries misuse your name.

²¹ *Do I not hate those who hate you, LORD,
and abhor those who are in rebellion against you?*

²² *I have nothing but hatred for them;
I count them my enemies.*

²³ *Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.*

²⁴ *See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.*

3

REFLECTION ACTIVITY: NAME THE TENTACLES

Take time today not to strive, but to reflect and invite the Spirit to show you the truth about your heart.

1. **Find a quiet space** where you can be alone with the Lord.
2. **Begin with prayer.** Ask the Holy Spirit to gently search your heart and reveal the areas where your flesh still has influence. Pray in your own words something like:

“Holy Spirit, I don’t want to climb blind to the cracks beneath me. Expose what’s hidden. Reveal the patterns, lies, and instincts of the flesh that are still shaping how I think, react, and live. I don’t want to carry them into the next part of the climb. Show me the truth, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

3. **Use the “flesh octopus” on the next page.** Let it represent your flesh. Then, on each tentacle, write down a specific area of struggle of your flesh that has been exposed this week.

Look over the page slowly and honestly. You’re not naming these to be condemned—you’re naming them to prepare for freedom.

Feel free to add or take away tentacles as needed.

4. **At the bottom of the page, write this phrase:**

“This is not who I am. This is what the Spirit is freeing me from.”

Keep this page earmarked for next week’s journey as we shift our focus. Because starting tomorrow, we stop feeding the octopus—and start learning how to walk in the Spirit.



Week 4

BASECAMP BRIEFING

Don't climb alone. Meet weekly with a spiritual coach—someone farther along in the journey. Use questions from each section of this talk sheet to reflect, pray, and grow together.

GEAR CHECK



1

1. **What did this week reveal about the way your flesh operates in your daily life?**
2. Have you noticed any patterns or “default responses” that need to be surrendered?
3. What spiritual tools (prayer, Scripture, accountability) helped you the most this week?
4. In what area do you feel more spiritually aware or equipped than before?

WEATHER REPORT



2

1. **What was the climate of your life this week (circle one)?**



TRAIL CONDITIONS



3

1. Did you encounter any emotional or spiritual resistance as you read this week?
2. **How would you describe the “terrain” of your walk with God right now—smooth, steep, rocky, or stuck?**
3. What part of the teaching on the flesh felt new or different from what you’ve heard before?

CLIFFSIDE MOMENTS



4

1. What was the hardest moment you faced this week in terms of walking in obedience?
2. When did your flesh try to take over—and how did you respond?
3. **How did God show up in a moment of struggle, temptation, or vulnerability?**
4. Were there any moments of victory this week you want to celebrate?

SUMMIT GLIMPSES

5

1. What verse or truth stood out the most this week?
2. How did that verse give you strength, direction, or conviction?
3. **Did you sense God speaking something personal to you through His Word?**
4. How has your view of God's grace or power grown this week?

KNOTS AND TANGLES

6

1. Did the “flesh octopus” illustration help clarify anything—or raise more questions?
2. **Is there a specific area of your life where you feel stuck in old patterns?**
3. Are there any lingering doubts, fears, or lies you're struggling to untangle?

MAP & COMPASS

7

1. **Were you able to memorize and meditate on this week's Trail Marker?**
2. How did that verse help guide your thoughts or choices this week?
3. Did you find yourself returning to it in moments of temptation or weakness?
4. How can you make Scripture memory a regular part of your spiritual walk?

ROUTE PLANNING

8

1. **What's one practical step of obedience you sense God calling you to take this week?**
2. What do you need to stop doing—or start doing—to walk in the Spirit more fully?
3. What would trusting God over your flesh look like in a specific area of your life?

PRAYER AROUND THE FIRE

9

1. Write down each other's prayer requests and pray.

Week 4

CAMP 4: ASCENT POWER

CAMP 4
Ascent Power

TRAIL MARKER—A guiding memory verse to mark your path this week.

GALATIANS 5:25
Since we live by the Spirit,
let us keep in step with
the Spirit.



“The way up to the top of the mountain is always longer than you think. Don’t fool yourself, the moment will arrive when what seemed so near is still very far.”

—Paulo Coelho

22

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ASCENT POWER - WALKING IN THE SPIRIT

1 REST IN THE SPIRIT EMPOWERED STRENGTH

You've come a long way.

You've laid down the weight of shame.

You've exposed the hidden dangers of the flesh.

You've started to recognize the cracks beneath your feet and the patterns that pull you off course.

But now the climb shifts.

This week, the focus isn't on what's pulling you back—*it's on the One who leads you forward.*

Because the Christian life isn't powered by grit and willpower. It's sustained by walking in step with the Holy Spirit.

In 2023, Hari Budha Magar, a double above-knee amputee from Nepal, accomplished what seemed impossible: He became the first ever double above-knee amputee to summit Mount Everest, the tallest mountain on earth.*

Climbing is hard enough with two legs. But Hari had to relearn how to walk—step by painful step—with the help of prosthetic legs. He had to trust entirely in something outside of himself—something strong enough to bear his full weight and stable enough to carry him over brutal terrain.

And that's exactly what it's like to walk in the Spirit.

The Spirit is your strength.

Not a supplement. Not a sidekick. Not a motivational boost. He is your power to walk, your means to move, your balance and endurance on the steepest paths.

Like prosthetics to Magar, the Spirit is the power beneath you because your own legs can't carry you.

And to walk by the Spirit means leaning your full weight—not part-way, not occasionally—*completely* and *continually* on Him. You walk by a power that isn't your own—a strength beyond you, strong enough to carry your full weight because human strength is not enough. Like a climber with prosthetic legs, you don't hold back. You don't test the support—you

* Read Hari Budha Magar's story at haribudhamagar.com.

trust it. You lean in fully. Walking in the Spirit is just like that. As Hari Budha Magar bravely placed his full weight on his prosthetic legs to scale Everest, *walking in the Spirit means putting your full trust, your full dependence, on the Holy Spirit to carry you where you cannot go on your own.*

Step by step.

Not partway. *Completely.*

Some people treat the Holy Spirit like a vague force that shows up during emotional worship or big decisions. But the Bible shows us something far better: *The Spirit is a person.*

He is God Himself living in you.

He doesn't just visit you—He walks with you.

He doesn't just cheer you on from above—He empowers you from within.

“Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.” —Galatians 5:25

This is more than inspiration. It's step-by-step reliance. Like a climber depending on prosthetic legs, you must choose to lean on Him every moment of the climb.

Last week, we faced the dark realities of the flesh—those human reflexes and instincts that lead us off-course.

But you don't defeat the flesh by trying harder. You overcome it by walking with Someone stronger.

The Spirit doesn't demand perfection.

He asks for surrender.

He doesn't shout.

He leads.

And if you listen—if you follow—He will guide you up the mountain, carrying you where your old strength could never take you. This week we move from *merely resisting the flesh* to *walking in the Spirit*.

The Spirit doesn't just walk ahead of you—*He walks in you*. He doesn't shout directions from a distance or push from behind. He dwells within, empowering each step, strengthening every movement, and aligning your will with His.

Just like Hari Budha Magar didn't climb by trusting in what he had lost, but by relying fully on what had been given, you don't climb by trusting your old self. You climb by depending on the Spirit who lives in you—the one who supplies the strength you don't have on your own.

This is more than guidance.

It's inner transformation.

And this is where real freedom begins.

You don't need stronger legs.

You need a stronger Guide.

The Spirit is your footing, your balance, your power.

So lean in—like your life depends on Him. Because it does.

2

CHECK THE MAP

2 Corinthians 3:7-18

⁷ Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, transitory though it was, ⁸ will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? ⁹ If the ministry that brought condemnation was glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! ¹⁰ For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. ¹¹ And if what was transitory came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!

¹² Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. ¹³ We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. ¹⁴ But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. ¹⁵ Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. ¹⁶ But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate a the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

3**TRAIL REFLECTIONS**

1. In what areas do you rely on the Spirit the way Hari Budha Magar relied on his prosthetic legs—or are you still trying to climb in your own strength?

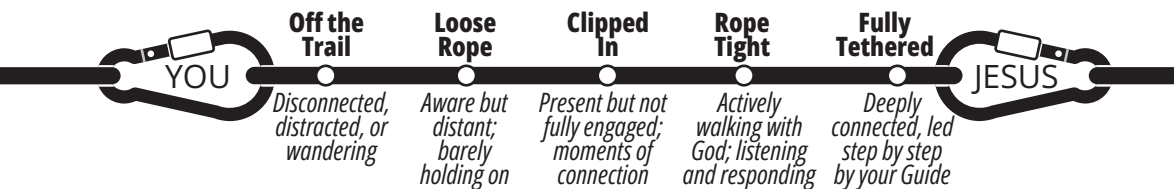
2. Where do you feel weakest right now—and how might the Spirit meet you there with His strength?

4**ROPE CHECK**

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

Community & Church Life

- Being honest and vulnerable with others
- Pursuing unity, not division
- Serving the Body of Christ
- Being disciplined—and discipling others
- Praying for and with fellow believers



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

23

01 Base Camp - The Call to Climb
02 Camp 2 - Salvation & Identity
03 Camp 3 - The Flesh Within
04 Camp 4 - Ascent Power
05 Camp 5 - The Death Zone
06 The Summit - Living for The Cause



DAILY SURRENDER AT HIGH ALTITUDE

1 YOU CLIMB HIGHER WHEN YOU RELEASE CONTROL

Climbing at high altitude is a different world.
The air is thinner.

The margin for error is smaller.

And the need for dependence is greater.

Even experienced climbers know—you can't climb the way you did at lower altitudes. You have to slow down. Watch every step. Listen to your body. And, most importantly, you have to release control completely to your guide.

That's exactly what the spiritual life is like as you grow in maturity.

The higher you go with Jesus, the more you realize that discipleship isn't about control—*it's about surrender.*

Walking in the Spirit is not a part-time mindset or a Sunday morning vibe. It's a daily posture of surrender—letting go of your plans, your preferences, your pace, and saying, "Lead me."

"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." —Luke 9:23

Jesus didn't say "try harder." He said "*deny yourself.*"

The life of the Spirit begins when self is laid down.

Not once. Not occasionally.

Daily.

You may want to climb by grit and strategy. But in the Kingdom, altitude is gained through surrender, not control. ***You can't walk in the Spirit and grip the steering wheel.***

Surrender isn't weakness—it's power under submission.

It's trusting that God's will is better, His wisdom is greater, and His Spirit is stronger than anything you could produce in your own strength.

That means:

- You let go of the desire to be seen.
- You stop trying to fix yourself.
- You stop living for approval, comfort, or control.

- You release the need to manage outcomes.

And in that empty space, the Spirit fills you. Leads you. Empowers you. *You can't be full of the Spirit and full of yourself.* This is where true transformation begins—*not with doing more for God, but by giving Him access to do more in you.*

Back to the words of Jesus:

“...let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” —Luke 9:23b

Notice Jesus didn't say, “Take up your cross once.”

He said, “*daily.*”

Following Jesus isn't just about the big moments of surrender. It's about the small ones:

- Choosing to pause and pray before reacting.
- Saying “no” to the flesh in everyday decisions.
- Slowing down long enough to listen to the Spirit's whisper.

That's how you climb at high altitude.

Step by step. Surrender by surrender. Breath by breath.

2

CHECK THE MAP

Luke 9:21-27

²¹ *Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone.*

²² *And he said, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.”*

²³ *Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. ²⁵ What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self? ²⁶ Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.*

²⁷ *“Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God.”*

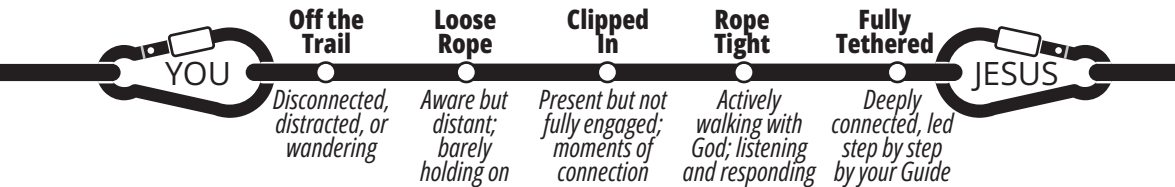
4

ROPE CHECK

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

Hidden Motivations & Desires

- Why I want to succeed or be noticed
- What I daydream about or chase after
- Where I seek validation (God vs. people)
- Desires for power, status, or approval
- Letting God refine why I do what I do



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

24

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03 Camp 3 - The Flesh Within
04 Camp 4 - Ascent Power
05 Camp 5 - The Death Zone
06 The Summit - Living for The Cause



THE FRUIT TRAIL - LOVE THAT LEADS

1 LOVE IS THE FIRST SIGN YOU'RE ON THE RIGHT TRAIL

Imagine you're deep into a long mountain trek. The trail has been winding and steep, and for the last stretch, you haven't seen any signs. Doubt creeps in—*Am I still going the right way? Did I miss a turn?* You scan the trees, the rocks, the ridge ahead. Then you see it—a *weathered trail marker nailed to a tree*. Your chest loosens. Relief washes over you. You're not lost. You're still on the path.

Walking with the Spirit often feels the same. The climb of discipleship can be disorienting at times. You wonder if you're making progress, if you're still following well, if anything is really changing inside you. But then something beautiful appears—*love*.

Not just any love, but the kind that shows up unexpectedly: forgiving someone who hurt you, feeling peace where you once felt rage, choosing patience instead of snapping back. ***That kind of love is the first and clearest trail marker that the Spirit is at work in your life.***

When you see love leading the way, you can be sure you're on the right trail.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love..." —Galatians 5:22

Notice something important here: Paul didn't say "*the fruits of the Spirit are...*"

He said, "*the fruit of the Spirit is...*"—**singular**.

That's not a grammatical mistake. It's deep spiritual truth.

Famously the Greek word Paul uses for "love" is *agape*—a rare and radical word in the Greco-Roman world. In the Greek language, there were several common Greek words for love.

- **Eros** referred to romantic or sensual love.
- **Philia** described friendship or mutual affection.
- **Storge** captured the love within families.

But *agape*?

That word was rare—barely used in everyday Greek conversation. When it was used, it was vague, undefined, and lacked the emotional

warmth or mutual exchange found in other forms of love. It didn't have a clear picture attached to it.

So when Paul—and the early church—began using *agape* to describe the defining trait of God's character and the foundation of Christian living, they weren't borrowing a familiar cultural idea.

So Paul didn't just use the word—he defined it.

He laid out what *agape* looks like by listing its markers:

The fruit of the Spirit is love: joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. —Galatians 5:22-23a

In other words:

- **Joy** is *love celebrating*.
- **Peace** is *love resting*.
- **Patience** is *love enduring*.
- **Kindness** is *love acting*.
- **Goodness** is *love choosing what is right*.
- **Faithfulness** is *love staying*.
- **Gentleness** is *love yielding*.
- **Self-control** is *love governing desire*.

All of these are not separate fruits. They are facets of one single fruit—the supernatural, Spirit-born love of God flowing through your life.

Agape love is a signpost you can't fake. This love isn't just being "nice" or tolerant. It's sacrificial, selfless, others-focused, and Spirit-powered.

Agape love shows up when:

- You forgive someone who doesn't deserve it.
- You serve without expecting credit.
- You speak truth gently, even when it costs you.
- You show up again when you'd rather walk away.

You can't manufacture this kind of love. You can't grit your teeth and produce it. It grows when you're walking in the Spirit. *Agape* love is the trail marker of the Spirit-led life.

When Jesus was asked to name the greatest commandment, He didn't hesitate:

"Love the Lord your God... and love your neighbor as yourself." —Matthew 22:37, 39

And before He went to the cross, He made it even clearer:

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” —John 13:35

Agape love is the evidence—not how much you know, how loud you worship, or how many verses you can quote.

If the Holy Spirit is empowering you, *agape* love will be visible.

2

CHECK THE MAP

John 13:31-38

³¹ *When he was gone, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. ³² If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.*

³³ *“My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.*

³⁴ *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*

³⁶ *Simon Peter asked him, “Lord, where are you going?”*

Jesus replied, “Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later.”

³⁷ *Peter asked, “Lord, why can’t I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.”*

³⁸ *Then Jesus answered, “Will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!*

3

TRAIL REFLECTIONS

1. What’s your response to realizing that the “fruit” of the Spirit is singular—not a list of separate virtues, but one unified expression of a Spirit-filled life rooted in love? How does that challenge or reshape the way you think about spiritual fruit?

2. Which marker of *agape* love—*joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, or self-control*—needs to grow most in your life right now? Why?

3. Can you think of a recent moment when *agape* love showed up through you in a way you knew wasn't from you?

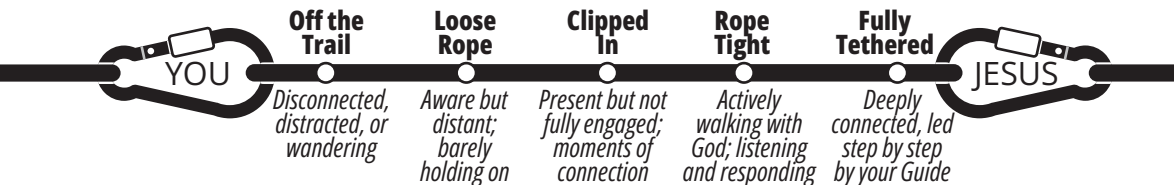
4

ROPE CHECK

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

Decision-Making Moments

- Big life transitions (job, school, moving)
- Small daily choices that shape habits
- Seeking God's will vs. leaning on logic alone
- Surrendering the “what ifs” to God
- Waiting for green lights instead of forcing doors open



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

25

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JOY AND PEACE IN THE STORM

1 YOUR ANCHOR POINTS IN HARDSHIP

You can tell a lot about a climber not by how they move in perfect conditions, but *by how they respond when a storm rolls in.*

In the harshest winds, when visibility fades and the trail disappears, good climbers look for anchor points—places of strength that keep them grounded and safe.

In the same way, when you're walking in the Spirit and life turns upside down, two anchor points you'll experience are *joy* and *peace*.

These aren't surface-level emotions or forced positivity. They're far more powerful—anchored in something deeper than your circumstances. They are the fruit of the Spirit, living proof that you're leaning into the Holy Spirit when the winds howl and the storm rages. This is *agape* love in action—unshaken, unyielding, alive in the middle of the storm.

Joy Is Love Celebrating—Even in Sorrow

Joy doesn't mean you're always smiling. It's not about faking happiness or pretending everything's fine when it's not. Happiness rises and falls with circumstances—it can be manufactured by human effort. But joy is different. Joy runs deeper. It's not tied to what's happening around you but to who you're trusting in. Joy that results from *agape* love flows from dependence on God, not the situation. It's a quiet confidence, a settled delight that holds steady—even when life doesn't.

Real joy—the kind the Spirit produces—is deeper than emotion. It's a settled gladness in the goodness of God that suffering can't touch and circumstances can't take away. This kind of joy doesn't ignore grief—it sings through it. It doesn't eliminate pain—it *outlasts it*.

Joy says, "*I know whom I have believed*" (2 Timothy 1:12), even when I don't understand what's happening around me. It's the kind of joy Paul had in a prison cell, writing letters of encouragement and worship while chained to a wall. It's the kind of joy the early church carried while facing persecution, poverty, and death—yet somehow remained unshakably thankful.

And it's the kind of joy Jesus Himself embodied, even on the road to

the cross:

“For the joy set before him, he endured the cross...”
—Hebrews 12:2

That joy didn't come from comfort or ease. It came from *agape* love—love that celebrated what His Father was doing, even in the pain. It celebrated the bigger picture, the greater purpose, and the glory to come.

Though you do not see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory.
—1 Peter 1:8

This kind of joy isn't naïve. It's anchored. It doesn't rise and fall with your mood or your news feed. It's not based on outcomes—it's based on relationship with Jesus, and the deep, Spirit-breathed assurance that He is with you, for you, and working in you no matter what.

Joy is love celebrating—not because everything is easy, but because God is still good. And when you walk with the Spirit, that kind of joy will start showing up when you least expect it, but need it most.

Peace Is Love Resting—Even in Chaos

Peace isn't the absence of trouble—it's the presence of the Spirit right in the middle of it. It's not the stillness of perfect circumstances—it's the stillness of a Spirit-anchored heart, even when everything around you is shaking.

When the Spirit is producing *agape* love in your heart, that love doesn't panic under pressure—it rests. It shows up as peace that quiets your fear, settles your anxiety, and gives you perspective in the middle of the fog.

This kind of peace is not fragile or fleeting. It isn't found in a perfectly planned week or a smooth climb. *It's born in surrender.*

You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. —Isaiah 26:3

Peace doesn't come from having all the answers—it comes from knowing the One who does. It doesn't come from being in control—it comes from letting go of control and trusting the One who's already holding you.

It's the peace Jesus had when He slept through the storm on the Sea of Galilee while His disciples panicked. It's the peace He gave when He looked them in the eye and said,

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you... Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid”

—John 14:27

It's not surface-level calm—it's love deeply convinced that God is near, God is good, and God is still working, even when nothing around you makes sense.

Peace is love saying:

- “God's got this—so I don't have to.”
- “Even in this chaos, I know who my Rock is.”
- “I can exhale now. He's in control.”

This is the kind of peace that keeps you grounded when life tries to spin you out. The kind that guards your heart like armor. The kind that whispers to your soul, even in the storm: “*You're safe. You're seen. You can rest.*”

And that's not something you work up—it's something the Spirit grows in you when you walk with Him.

Joy and Peace Are Love's Anchor Points in the Storm

As we saw yesterday, each fruit of the Spirit is a facet of *agape* love:

- Joy is *agape* love celebrating.
- Peace is *agape* love resting.

These two are especially powerful because they stabilize your soul in life's hardest moments. They're not random emotions—they are evidence that the Spirit is active in you, producing a love that is stronger than fear, pain, or pressure.

When storms come—and they will—don't just brace yourself. *Anchor yourself in the Spirit.*

Let joy rise. Let peace settle.

And trust that His love is holding you fast.

2

CHECK THE MAP

Matthew 8:23-27

²³ *Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him.* ²⁴ *Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping.* ²⁵ *The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Lord, save us! We're going to drown!”*

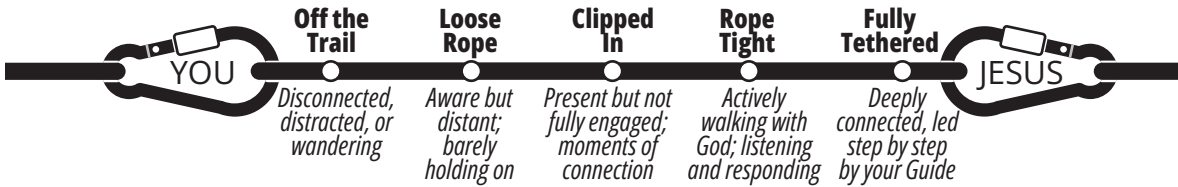
²⁶ *He replied, “You of little faith, why are you so afraid?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.*

4**ROPE CHECK**

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

Personal Integrity When No One Sees

- What I watch, listen to, or laugh at
- What I do with idle time
- Who I am when I'm tired, stressed, or disappointed
- Following through on what I say
- Doing the right thing even when it's unnoticed



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

26

01 Base Camp - The Call to Climb
02 Camp 2 - Salvation & Identity
03 Camp 3 - The Flesh Within
04 Camp 4 - Ascent Power
05 Camp 5 - The Death Zone
06 The Summit - Living for The Cause



PATIENCE, KINDNESS, & GOODNESS ON THE CLIMB

1

LOVE ENDURES WITH GRACE & ACTS WITH COMPASSION

Climbing a mountain isn't just about strength—it's about *pace*.

You don't reach the summit by sprinting. You get there by enduring, by adjusting to the terrain, and by treating others on the path with care and respect.

In the same way, walking in the Spirit isn't just about power—it's about character.

As the Spirit grows *agape* love in your life, it begins to show up in quiet, steady ways—*patience* that endures, *kindness* that reaches out, and *goodness* that consistently chooses what is right, even when no one's watching.

And it's no coincidence Paul lists patience and kindness as the first two in his famous definition of *agape* love:

"Love is patient, love is kind..." —1 Corinthians 13:4

These are two more vital trail markers of *agape* love—evidence that you are depending upon the Holy Spirit in the climb of life.

Patience Is Love Enduring

Patience means more than just waiting. It's how you wait.

It's the posture of your heart while you wait on God, deal with people, or walk through a season that's slower and harder than you expected. It's love refusing to explode in frustration, refusing to quit, and refusing to assume the worst—about God, about others, or about yourself.

Patience is *agape* love saying:

"I can't see what's ahead, but I can trust the One who does."

"I don't need to force this—I'll let God finish what He started."

Patience is what keeps you climbing when:

- The trail seems to wind forever with no summit in sight.
- You're dealing with people who drain your energy, test your nerves, or fail to change.
- You're stuck in a waiting room season—longing for a breakthrough, but hearing only silence.

This kind of endurance doesn't come from willpower. It comes from *agape* love rooted in the Spirit of God—a love that waits with hope instead of complaining, that remains steady instead of snapping, and that believes God is still working even when nothing seems to be moving.

Patience doesn't mean you stop caring or give up your desires. It means you surrender the timeline. You stop measuring progress by how fast things change and start measuring it by how closely you're walking with the Spirit.

Because patience isn't passive—it's powerful. It's not weak—it's deeply resilient. And no, it doesn't come naturally. It's not a personality trait or a temperament quirk. It's supernatural fruit—grown by the Spirit in the soil of surrender.

The more you walk with Him, the more your soul learns to say: *"I'm not in a rush. God is still writing this story. And I can endure this part of the trail because I'm not walking it alone."*

That's the kind of patience that marks a life led by the Spirit.

And that's the kind of patience that leads you steadily upward, no matter how long the climb takes.

Kindness Is Love Acting

Kindness is *agape* love with boots on—ready to move, ready to serve, ready to show up where love is needed most. It's not just a warm smile or polite manners. It's not shallow niceness or performative gestures.

Kindness is intentional goodness, deliberately directed at others—especially when it's inconvenient, costly, or undeserved. It shows up not just when it's easy, but when it would be easier not to.

Kindness is:

- Speaking life when it'd be easier to criticize or stay silent.
- Slowing down to notice the person others overlook.
- Offering grace when someone else gives you attitude.
- Doing something generous, not for attention or applause, but because love compels you to act.

And here's the surprising thing about kindness: It's powerful. It seems soft on the surface, but it carries the transforming weight of God's love. Why? Because kindness reflects the very heart of God.

"But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked."

—Luke 6:35

Think about that for a moment. God doesn't just show kindness to people who deserve it. He shows it to people who reject Him, ignore Him, and dishonor Him.

That kind of kindness is radical, disarming, and life-changing. And when His Spirit lives in you, you begin to love like that too. You start to see people differently—not as problems to avoid, but as souls to serve. You start to act not out of guilt or obligation, but out of the overflow of God's kindness toward you. Kindness becomes your instinct—not because you're trying to earn something, but because you've already received everything in Christ.

In a world where sarcasm, cynicism, and cruelty are common, kindness is counter-cultural.

It slows the rush. Softens the edge. And builds bridges where walls once stood.

So when the Spirit is alive in you, love won't just feel something—it will do something.

Kindness is *agape* love with sleeves rolled up and hands extended.

And it's one of the clearest signs that the Spirit is not only working in you—but also working through you

Goodness Is Love Choosing What's Right

Goodness isn't just about being a "good person." It's not about being nice or playing by the rules when it's easy.

Goodness is moral courage—the deep conviction to do what is right, even when it's hard, inconvenient, unpopular, or unnoticed. It's love that refuses to cut corners, tell half-truths, or live with hidden compromise.

It's *agape* love that acts with integrity when no one is watching and still does the right thing even when *doing the wrong thing would be easier, faster, or more profitable*.

It's love that says:

- "I won't lie to protect my reputation."
- "I'll return what's not mine—even if it's just a small thing."
- "I'll stand up for someone being mistreated, even if it means I'm the only one speaking."

Goodness is not about perfection—it's about pursuing holiness because your heart wants to reflect the One who saved you. It's *agape* love that doesn't bend with cultural trends or justify itself with *every-one's doing it*." It's love that stands strong under pressure, not because of self-righteousness, but because it's rooted in the Spirit of the Holy God.

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with

good.” —Romans 12:21

Goodness is what happens when *agape* love chooses courage over compromise. It’s what makes your beliefs visible—not just in your words, but in your actions. And when the Spirit is producing goodness in you, people may not always agree with you, but they’ll know they can respect you integrity flowing from your *agape* love for the Lord.

They’ll see something real. Something solid.

Someone reflecting Jesus

When the Climb Gets Hard, Love Slows Down

The higher you climb, the more patience, kindness, and goodness matter. Why?

Because people get tired.

Tempers flare.

The temptation to snap, rush, or isolate grows.

But the Spirit teaches you a different way. He teaches you to slow down, to patiently wait, to treat others with the same grace, gentleness, and goodness that God shows you every single day.

That’s what *agape* love looks like on the climb.

2

CHECK THE MAP

Luke 6:17-36

¹⁷ *He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon,*
¹⁸ *who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by impure spirits were cured,*
¹⁹ *and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.*

²⁰ *Looking at his disciples, he said:*

*“Blessed are you who are poor,
for yours is the kingdom of God.*

²¹ *Blessed are you who hunger now,
for you will be satisfied.*

*Blessed are you who weep now,
for you will laugh.*

²² *Blessed are you when people hate you,
when they exclude you and insult you
and reject your name as evil,*

because of the Son of Man.

²³ *“Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their ancestors treated the prophets.*

²⁴ *“But woe to you who are rich,
for you have already received your comfort.*

²⁵ *Woe to you who are well fed now,
for you will go hungry.*

*Woe to you who laugh now,
for you will mourn and weep.*

²⁶ *Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you,
for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets.*

²⁷ *“But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. ²⁹ If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. ³⁰ Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. ³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you.*

³² *“If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. ³³ And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. ³⁴ And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. ³⁵ But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.*

3

TRAIL REFLECTIONS

1. In what situation or relationship do you most struggle to show patience? Why?

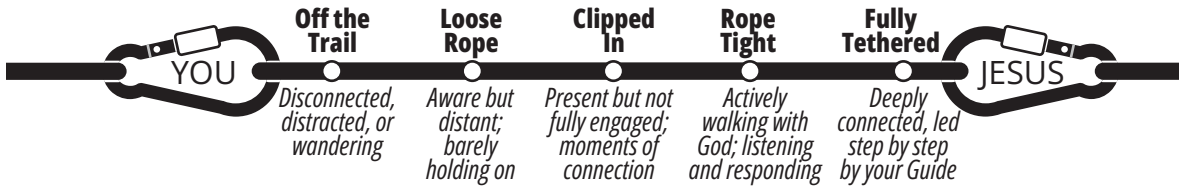
4

ROPE CHECK

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

Emotional & Internal Health

- Letting God speak into anxiety and panic
- Taking pain and trauma to the Healer
- Processing anger with Him, not just venting it
- Replacing shame with grace
- Being emotionally honest in prayer



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

27

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05 Camp 5 - The Death Zone
06 The Summit - Living for The Cause



FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS & SELF-CONTROL

1

LOVE STAYS, SOFTENS, AND REIGNS OVER IMPULSE

As the climb goes on, the trail gets narrower, the stakes get higher, and the pressure to compromise grows. That's why the fruit of the Spirit isn't just about surviving the journey—it's about walking with consistency, integrity, and trustworthiness the entire way up.

As you near the summit of this spiritual climb, the terrain becomes more demanding. The higher you go, the more pressure you face—not just from outside, but from within. That's why the final expressions of the Spirit's *agape* fruit are so critical: *faithfulness*, *gentleness*, and *self-control*.

These are not weak traits.

They are quiet strength, forged in the fire of surrender and grown by the Spirit as love takes root in your life.

Faithfulness Is Love Staying

Faithfulness is steadfast *agape* love in motion.

It's not loud. It's not flashy. But it is strong, steady, and rare. *Faithfulness is love that keeps showing up—again and again—when it would be easier to walk away.*

It's the kind of love that says:

- “You can count on me, even when I'm tired.”
- “I don't just say I'll be there—I follow through.”
- “I'm still here, not because it's easy, but because I gave my word.”

Faithfulness is what holds relationships together through dry seasons, what carries marriages through hard conversations, and what sustains ministry when emotions run low and results are slow.

- It's what turns a volunteer into a mentor.
- What turns a parent into a legacy-builder.
- What turns a believer into a disciple-maker.

In a world that says, “*Do what feels right*” and “*You don't owe anyone anything*,” faithfulness is counter-cultural. It's revolutionary because it stays grounded in commitment, not convenience. And it reflects the unwavering character of a God who never leaves, never forsakes, and

never gives up.

Let love and faithfulness never leave you... then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.
—Proverbs 3:3–4

This kind of loyalty doesn't come from discipline alone. It's fruit—grown by the Spirit in hearts that have been captured by the faithfulness of God Himself.

When the Spirit is alive in you, you become someone others can trust—not because you're flawless, but because God's *agape* love in you refuses to quit.

So show up. Stay. Be faithful.

Because love that lasts—that's what changes lives.

And that's what Spirit-led climbers are known for.

Gentleness Is Love Yielding

Gentleness is agape love with its hands open—not clenched fists, not defensive postures, not raised voices. It's not the absence of strength—it's strength restrained by love, humility, and grace.

It's power under control.

Firmness without force.

Truth without a harsh edge.

Correction without condemnation.

It shows up in the quiet moments when love refuses to crush what is already fragile.

- When someone wounds you, and you respond with calm instead of criticism.
- When someone fails again, and you correct with compassion instead of shame.
- When emotions are high, but you choose to listen instead of lecture.
- When your voice could win the argument, but you soften your tone to preserve the relationship.

Gentleness is the spiritual opposite of control, domination, or aggression. It doesn't manipulate. It doesn't coerce. It doesn't bulldoze to get its way. It yields—not out of weakness, but out of wisdom.

Gentleness is the posture of Jesus:

“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” —Matthew 11:29

Think about that. The King of kings. The Commander of angel armies. The One with all authority in heaven and on earth—describes Himself as *gentle*.

That means the closer you walk with Jesus, the more gentleness begins to flow through you. Not passive. Not soft. But anchored in love so deeply, you don't have to prove your strength—you just reflect His.

“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” —Proverbs 15:1

Gentleness defuses tension. It softens conflict. It opens doors to restoration and healing that harshness would slam shut. And when the Spirit is truly at work in you, gentleness becomes a trailmark of maturity.

Self-Control Is Love Reigning Over Impulse

Self-control is agape love holding the reins. It's the Spirit-empowered ability to say “no” to the flesh and “yes” to freedom. It's not cold discipline or behavior suppression—it's love choosing what's best over what's immediate.

It shows up when:

- You pause before reacting in anger or sarcasm.
- You close your mouth instead of gossiping or defending yourself.
- You walk away from a temptation that once had a grip on you.
- You turn off the screen, close the fridge, delete the app—not out of shame, but because your heart desires something better.

Self-control is what protects every other fruit of the Spirit. Without it, joy is stolen by anxiety, peace is disrupted by outbursts, and faithfulness collapses under pressure. But when self-control is present, *agape* love holds its shape, convictions stay clear, and the soul stays anchored.

“Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control.” —Proverbs 25:28

Without self-control, we become spiritually exposed—vulnerable to every passing emotion, craving, and urge.

But here's the paradox: *True self-control isn't about tightening your grip—it's about surrendering your control.*

It's not the result of sheer willpower or moral effort.

It's the overflow of a life ruled by the Spirit, not driven by the flesh.

It's not about white-knuckling your way to holiness.

It's about being so filled with the Spirit that your desires begin to shift—and your old impulses lose their pull. Self-control isn't about managing sin—it's about walking in victory. And that only happens when

agape love is in charge, and the Spirit is leading the way.

2

CHECK THE MAP

Proverbs 7

- ¹ *My son, keep my words
and store up my commands within you.*
- ² *Keep my commands and you will live;
guard my teachings as the apple of your eye.*
- ³ *Bind them on your fingers;
write them on the tablet of your heart.*
- ⁴ *Say to wisdom, "You are my sister,"
and to insight, "You are my relative."*
- ⁵ *They will keep you from the adulterous woman,
from the wayward woman with her seductive
words.*
- ⁶ *At the window of my house
I looked down through the lattice.*
- ⁷ *I saw among the simple,
I noticed among the young men,
a youth who had no sense.*
- ⁸ *He was going down the street near her corner,
walking along in the direction of her house*
- ⁹ *at twilight, as the day was fading,
as the dark of night set in.*
- ¹⁰ *Then out came a woman to meet him,
dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent.*
- ¹¹ *(She is unruly and defiant,
her feet never stay at home;*
- ¹² *now in the street, now in the squares,
at every corner she lurks.)*
- ¹³ *She took hold of him and kissed him
and with a brazen face she said:*
- ¹⁴ *"Today I fulfilled my vows,
and I have food from my fellowship offering at
home.*
- ¹⁵ *So I came out to meet you;
I looked for you and have found you!*
- ¹⁶ *I have covered my bed
with colored linens from Egypt.*
- ¹⁷ *I have perfumed my bed*

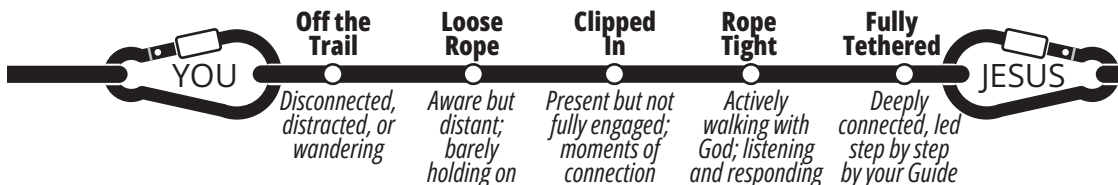
3. What impulse or desire most needs to come under the Spirit's control in your life?

4 ROPE CHECK

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

Routine & Mundane Moments

- Washing dishes, driving, working—doing all as worship
- Offering ordinary moments as sacred space
- Practicing the presence of God in the “boring”
- Being grateful in routine, not restless
- Staying faithful in things that feel unseen



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.



REFLECTION & REST - THE SPIRIT KILLS THE FLESH

1

CLIMBING IN YOUR OWN STRENGTH OR BY THE SPIRIT?

You've just finished one of the most important stretches of the climb.

This week wasn't about doing more for God—it was about learning to walk with God.

You explored what it means to live a Spirit-led life—one step at a time, with the fruit of *agape* love showing up in joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

And now it's time to pause and reflect: ***Are you climbing in your own strength, or are you truly walking by the Spirit?***

Because no matter how gifted, experienced, or determined you are—you cannot summit this mountain alone. You weren't made to power through. You were made to depend.

Use today to reflect, not strive. This isn't a day to push forward. It's a day to slow down, to check your footing, and to let the Spirit speak.

Take a few minutes to be still and ask:

- *Am I relying on the Spirit—or on my own abilities, routines, or knowledge?*
- *Am I walking in surrender—or slipping back into striving?*

Remember: Climbing with the Spirit isn't a race. It's not about how fast you go—it's about who you're walking with. It's about matching your pace to His, relying on His power, and letting Him lead you higher, deeper, and closer to the life you were made for.

2

CHECK THE MAP

Zechariah 4:1-10

¹ Then the angel who talked with me returned and woke me up, like someone awakened from sleep. ² He asked me, "What do you see?"

I answered, "I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lamps on it, with seven channels to the lamps. ³ Also there are two olive trees by

it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left.”

⁴ *I asked the angel who talked with me, “What are these, my lord?”*

⁵ *He answered, “Do you not know what these are?”*

“No, my lord,” I replied.

⁶ *So he said to me, “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the LORD Almighty.*

⁷ *“What are you, mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground. Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of ‘God bless it! God bless it!’ ”*

⁸ *Then the word of the LORD came to me: ⁹ “The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands will also complete it. Then you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me to you.*

¹⁰ *“Who dares despise the day of small things, since the seven eyes of the LORD that range throughout the earth will rejoice when they see the chosen capstone in the hand of Zerubbabel?”*

3

REFLECTION ACTIVITY: LET THE SPIRIT KILL THE FLESH

Take time today not to strive, but to reflect and invite the Spirit to show you the truth about your heart.

- 1. Find a quiet place** where you can sit without distraction.
- 2. Begin in prayer**, inviting the Holy Spirit to search your heart:
“Show me, Lord, where I’m still climbing in my own strength and where Your Spirit is leading me into freedom.”
- 3. Look back at your “flesh octopus” drawing from Day 21.** Revisit what you wrote on each tentacle—those old habits, lies, or patterns that have held you back.
Then ask:
 - *Where have I seen the Spirit break those patterns this week?*
 - *Where is fruit beginning to grow where flesh once reigned?*
- 4. Then on the next page, you’ll see a new symbol—delicious fruit from a tree.** On each of the four fruits, write a circum-

stance over the past few weeks in which you noticed a fruit of the Spirit showing up in your life. Be honest. Celebrate growth, even if it's small.

Let this be a sacred moment—a reminder that you're not who you were, and you're not climbing alone.

This is the shift: From flesh-driven survival...

To Spirit-empowered ascent.



Week 5

BASECAMP BRIEFING

Don't climb alone. Meet weekly with a spiritual coach—someone farther along in the journey. Use questions from each section of this talk sheet to reflect, pray, and grow together.

GEAR CHECK

1

1. Where did you notice yourself relying more on God's power than your own this week?
2. What tools (prayer, Scripture, surrender) helped you stay connected to the Spirit?
3. Are there spiritual "tools" you've neglected that you want to begin using again?
4. **What's one area of your heart that felt more surrendered to the Spirit this week?**

WEATHER REPORT

2

1. What was the overall "spiritual weather" of your week?



TRAIL CONDITIONS

3

1. Which day's devotion impacted you most this week—and why?
2. **What theme or truth kept resurfacing throughout the week?**
3. Was this week easier or more difficult to apply than previous weeks?
4. What surprised you about the "terrain" of walking in the Spirit?

CLIFFSIDE MOMENTS

4

1. When did you most struggle to walk by the Spirit this week?
2. Were there any moments you felt a prompting from the Spirit but hesitated?
3. How did you handle a moment of temptation, frustration, or weakness?
4. **What's a real-life example of a Spirit-led decision or response you experienced?**

SUMMIT GLIMPSES

5

1. **What truth from Scripture helped you see life differently this week?**
2. Was there a verse or passage that gave you a clearer vision of freedom in the Spirit?
3. How did God use His Word to affirm, encourage, or correct you?
4. Did you gain any fresh insight into what God wants to produce in you?

MAP & COMPASS

7

1. **Were you able to memorize and reflect on this week's Trail Marker?**
2. Did that verse help anchor you in moments of uncertainty or temptation?
3. How did it guide your decisions or shape your thinking?
4. What's one way you can continue to carry that verse with you into next week?

PRAYER AROUND THE FIRE

1. **Write down each other's prayer requests and pray.**

KNOTS AND TANGLES

6

1. What part of this week's teaching was hard to understand or apply?
2. **How did you struggle with knowing when it's the Spirit versus your own thoughts?**
3. What internal resistance came up when you tried to let go of control?
4. Is there a lingering question about the Spirit's role or voice in your life?

ROUTE PLANNING

8

1. **What's one clear step of Spirit-led obedience you need to take this week?**
2. How will you create space daily to listen for the Spirit's voice?
3. Is there something you need to stop doing to make room for God's power?
4. Who could you encourage or influence by walking in the Spirit more fully?

9

Week 5

CAMP 5: THE DEATH ZONE

CAMP 5
The Death Zone

TRAIL MARKER—A guiding memory verse to mark your path this week.

GALATIANS 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.



“Getting to the top is optional.
Getting down is mandatory.”

—Ed Viesturs

*first American to summit all 14 of
the world's 8,000-meter peaks*

29

01 Base Camp - The Call to Climb
02 Camp 2 - Salvation & Identity
03 Camp 3 - The Flesh Within
04 Camp 4 - Ascent Power
05 Camp 5 - The Death Zone
06 The Summit - Living for The Cause



WHAT IS JESUS WORTH TO YOU?

1 THE TRAIL BEGINS WITH A QUESTION THAT CAN'T BE DODGED

Every serious climber knows what happens when you enter *the Death Zone* on Mt. Everest. At altitudes above 26,000 feet, the air becomes so thin, the body can't survive for long.

Every ounce matters. Every step takes energy. There's no room for excess. No time for distractions. The summit demands everything.

And for the climber who wants to reach the top—the only way forward is full commitment.

That's what Week 5 is all about. This is your *Spiritual Death Zone*.

Not a place of fear—but of focus.

Not where your life ends—but where your old existence dies so that real life in Jesus can rise.

You've already dropped the unnecessary gear.

You've faced the flesh.

You've learned to walk in the Spirit.

Now comes the deeper question: ***What is Jesus really worth to you?***

Discipleship has a price tag. Jesus never promised an easy trail.

He didn't say, "Admire Me from a distance."

He said,

"Take up your cross and follow Me." —Luke 9:23

And

"Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow Me cannot be My disciple." —Luke 14:27

He wasn't talking about inconvenience. He was talking about death to self—your pride, comfort, preferences, possessions, plans.

Following Jesus means choosing His kingdom over your comfort. It means laying down everything to pursue the One who gave everything for you.

Walking with Jesus isn't a casual hike. And make no mistake—He is worth it.

Sadly, we live in a culture of comfortable Christianity. One foot in the world, one foot on the trail. But Jesus never invited half-hearted hikers. He called *followers*.

And the trail of true discipleship always passes through surrender.

You may lose status.

You may walk away from opportunities.

You may have to say *no* to what everyone else says *yes* to.

You may face discomfort, sacrifice, and even suffering.

But you will gain Him.

And that's the question this week presses into: *Is Jesus worth more to you than anything you might lose?*

Ask yourself honestly:

Have I settled for a safe version of faith—one that believes but doesn't cost me anything?

Or am I living like Jesus is **truly worth everything?**

Because sooner or later, every climber reaches a point where they have to decide:

Do I press on—or turn back?

And only one question matters:

What is Jesus worth to you?

You can't summit halfway.

The Death Zone isn't about surviving—it's about deciding.

Only one question matters here: ***Is Jesus worth it?***

And when your answer is yes, the summit is closer than you think.

2

CHECK THE MAP

2 Corinthians 11:16-33

¹⁶ I repeat: Let no one take me for a fool. But if you do, then tolerate me just as you would a fool, so that I may do a little boasting. ¹⁷ In this self-confident boasting I am not talking as the Lord would, but as a fool. ¹⁸ Since many are boasting in the way the world does, I too will boast. ¹⁹ You gladly put up with fools since you are so wise! ²⁰ In fact, you even put up with anyone who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you or puts on airs or slaps you in the face. ²¹ To my shame I admit that we were too weak for that!

Whatever anyone else dares to boast about—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast about. ²² Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they

Abraham's descendants? So am I. ²³ Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. ²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, ²⁶ I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. ²⁷ I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. ²⁸ Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. ²⁹ Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?

³⁰ If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. ³¹ The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is to be praised forever, knows that I am not lying.

³² In Damascus the governor under King Aretas had the city of the Damascenes guarded in order to arrest me.

³³ But I was lowered in a basket from a window in the wall and slipped through his hands.

3

TRAIL REFLECTIONS

1. What have you already sacrificed or surrendered to follow Jesus? What was that like?

2. What's one area of your life right now where Jesus might be asking for more of you?

30

01 Base Camp - The Call to Climb
02 Camp 2 - Salvation & Identity
03 Camp 3 - The Flesh Within
04 Camp 4 - Ascent Power
05 Camp 5 - The Death Zone
06 The Summit - Living for The Cause



SAFETY ISN'T A FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

1

LEAVING THE COMFORT CAMPSITE

On every serious mountain climb, there's a point where the team must leave the last campsite behind. It's the place that was warm, familiar, and relatively safe. But the summit lies ahead—and no one reaches it by staying in the tent.

This is where many stop.

They've come far, changed some habits, surrendered obvious sins.

But they're not ready to let go of comfort, control, and especially financial security. And that's often the dividing line between belief and surrender.

Here's the secret of the Death Zone: ***Jesus never promised a safe and comfortable life.***

When someone approached Jesus and said they wanted to follow Him, He didn't say, "*Let's make a financial plan first.*"

He said:

"Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." —Luke 9:58

Jesus made it clear—following Him may cost you everything.

Home. Predictability. Retirement. Stability.

Following Jesus as a disciple was never about comfort. It's about complete dependence on the Father. And that includes how you handle your money.

One of the most practical and spiritual ways to surrender your finances is through *tithing*—giving the first 10% of your income back to the Lord as an act of faith and worship.

Tithing isn't legalism—it's alignment.

It says: "*Lord, You come first—not just in my words, but in my wallet. I give You the first 10%, trusting You to provide everything I need.*"

In Scripture, the tithe was described as *firstfruits*—not leftovers. It's not what you give after you've covered your expenses and met your goals. It's what you offer first, declaring that *God is your Provider*, not your paycheck.

Tithing trains your heart to let go of control and live in trust. It turns your money from a source of anxiety into an expression of worship. And more than that, it breaks the grip of greed, fear, and self-preservation.

Every climber knows—you can't reach the summit while staying safe and warm at basecamp. But while you travel through the Death Zone, the lighter your pack needs to be. And few things weigh us down more subtly—and stubbornly—than financial comfort.

Finances are one of the most common “comfort campsites.” We build our tents on the foundation of security, stability, and control.

We tell ourselves *we'll give more “when we're able.”* We delay obedience until it fits neatly into our spreadsheet. We redefine caution as wisdom—and call tight-fisted stewardship.

But Jesus didn't call us to “safe giving.” He called us to surrendered living.

“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

—Matthew 6:21

So if you're not willing to trust God with the first 10%, it's worth asking: Do you really trust Him with the rest?

We say we want to follow Jesus. But then we hesitate to tithe. We cling to what He's asked us to release. We hedge our bets, stay in the tent, and call it faith.

But let's be clear:

Discipleship doesn't begin when everything feels safe. It begins when we say, *“Even if it costs me—I'll follow You.”*

Tithing is one of the clearest and straightforward ways we can demonstrate that we've left the last campsite.

It's faith with feet. It's surrender with numbers attached. It's obedience that echoes into eternity. Because you can't climb while clinging to comfort. But you can go higher when your hands—and your heart—are open.

So, it's time to check your pack.

- Are you clinging to your money, or trusting God with it?
- Are you giving your firstfruits—or just your leftovers?
- Are you relying on your savings to feel secure, or on the Spirit to sustain you?

If Jesus had no place to lay His head and still trusted the Father completely, what's holding you back from that same level of faith?

2**CHECK THE MAP**

Luke 9:57-62

⁵⁷ *As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go."*

⁵⁸ *Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."*

⁵⁹ *He said to another man, "Follow me."*

But he replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."

⁶⁰ *Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God."*

⁶¹ *Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family."*

⁶² *Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."*

3**TRAIL REFLECTIONS**

1. Is tithing a consistent practice in your life—or has it taken a back seat to other priorities?

2. What fears or excuses have kept you from giving God the first portion of your income?

3. How does tithing challenge your view of security, control, or provision?

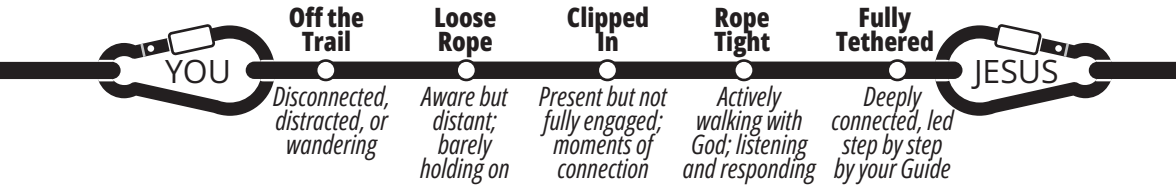
4. What step of obedience can you take this week to trust God more fully with your finances?

4 ROPE CHECK

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

Engaging the World Around You

- How I treat strangers or service workers
- How I respond to injustice
- Whether I speak up for the voiceless
- Living as salt and light in my workplace or school
- Praying for and investing in my local community



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

31

01 Base Camp - The Call to Climb
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03 Camp 3 - The Flesh Within
04 Camp 4 - Ascent Power
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06 The Summit - Living for The Cause



THE DEATH ZONE OF THE CROSS

1 THE PATH TO LIFE GOES THROUGH DEATH

I live in Western Colorado at about 6,000 feet, where we regularly travel Jeep trails through the beautiful San Juan Mountains, often climbing above 12,000 feet, surrounded by majestic +14,000-foot peaks. Up there, the air gets noticeably thinner. Every breath takes more effort. Every step feels heavier. You can't move at the same pace. You're constantly reminded—the higher you climb, the more crucial every breath becomes.

Now, imagine climbing through *the Death Zone* on Mt. Everest, where oxygen levels are so low at 26,000 feet, the human body begins to shut down. Your body begins to die with each step. You can't survive long. You're on borrowed time. And if you're going to reach the summit, you must strip away everything nonessential—and push forward with absolute focus.

That's exactly where Jesus invites us to go spiritually.

At this point in the climb, you're not just dropping distractions—you're dying to yourself. Not metaphorically. Not emotionally.

Daily. Deliberately. Entirely.

Jesus didn't invite us to self-help or spiritual comfort.

He invited us to the trail of the cross—a narrow, costly path that doesn't run around death, but straight through it.

"If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me." —Luke 9:23

And while that may sound like loss, Jesus made it clear: It's the only way to truly live.

*"Whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."
—Matthew 16:25*

Following Jesus as a disciple isn't about trying harder—it's about dying deeper.

We live in a world that says:

- "Follow your dreams."

- “Chase your truth.”
- “Live your best life now.”
- “Build your platform. Make your mark.”

But Jesus says: “*Lose your life. Lay it down. Die to self—and then you’ll finally live.*”

The Death Zone of the Cross isn’t about behavior modification. It’s not about managing your sin or doing your best. *It’s about killing what keeps you from Christ—your pride, your ambition, your need to be in control.*

It’s about surrendering not just your money or your habits, but your whole self—dreams, goals, timing, reputation, desires.

Sometimes people say things like, “*This illness is my cross to bear,*” or “*This job is just my cross.*” But in Scripture, the cross isn’t a burden—it’s a symbol of death. ***Carrying your cross means you’ve decided to die to anything that competes with Jesus’ lordship over your life.***

It’s choosing:

- Obedience over comfort.
- The Kingdom over your career.
- His will over your reputation.
- His glory over your goals.

This is not passive acceptance—it’s active, intentional surrender. And it’s the only path that leads to real life.

“I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. 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 10:9-10

If you want life, there’s only one road: The Death Zone of the Cross.

You don’t carry it once—you carry it daily. You don’t carry it to impress—you *carry it to die*. And when you do, something beautiful happens:

- Jesus starts to live through you.
- His love replaces your self-focus.
- His strength replaces your striving.
- His priorities become your passion.

And in the place where your old self died, you begin to find *life, and have it to the full.*

John 19:1-18

¹ Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. ² The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe ³ and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they slapped him in the face.

⁴ Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him." ⁵ When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!"

⁶ As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!"

But Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him."

⁷ The Jewish leaders insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God."

⁸ When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, ⁹ and he went back inside the palace. "Where do you come from?" he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰ "Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?"

¹¹ Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin."

¹² From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders kept shouting, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar."

¹³ When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge's seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha). ¹⁴ It was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about noon.

"Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews.

¹⁵ But they shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!"

*“Shall I crucify your king?” Pilate asked.
“We have no king but Caesar,” the chief priests
answered.*

*¹⁶ Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be
crucified.*

*So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. ¹⁷ Carrying his
own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in
Aramaic is called Golgotha). ¹⁸ There they crucified him,
and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in
the middle.*

3

TRAIL REFLECTIONS

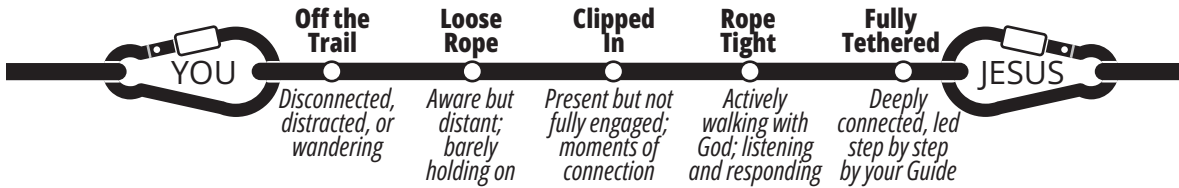
1. What part of your identity, ambition, or lifestyle still resists the cross?
2. Where have you been trying to follow Jesus without dying to self?
3. What would it look like to “lose your life” today in a real and practical way?
4. How is the Spirit inviting you to take up your cross—not just once, but daily?

4 ROPE CHECK

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

When I'm Hurt or Offended

- Responding with grace instead of retaliation
- Choosing forgiveness over bitterness
- Letting God heal wounds before reacting
- Praying for enemies or those who misunderstand me
- Asking God to examine my heart first



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

32

01 Base Camp - The Call to Climb
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DETACHING FROM THE WORLD BELOW

1

YOU CAN'T CLIMB WHILE CLINGING TO THE VALLEY

You can't climb higher while clinging to what's below. One hand on the mountain and one in the valley will leave you stuck—straining but never ascending. Yet that's exactly where many Christians stay in our inch-deep culture: caught between comfort and calling. But summit-seekers? They know the cost. And they let go.

This week is about total surrender. Not just sacrificing obvious sins or giving when it's easy—but detaching from everything that ties your heart to the world below.

That includes even the things that seem harmless—comfortable rhythms, accepted norms, and material goals. It means letting go of a version of “Christianity” that blends in so well with culture it costs you nothing. A Christian-branded version of the world, safe and sanitized, that embraces the same morals, values, and comforts as everyone else. But the true path upward? *It will cost you.* Because following Jesus never meant fitting in—it meant leaving everything behind.

You can't carry the cross and the world at the same time.

John said it plainly:

“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them.” —1 John 2:15

This doesn't mean withdrawing from life or rejecting beauty and creation. It means refusing to anchor your identity, joy, or purpose in the values of this world. Because let's be honest: ***We've gotten good at fitting Jesus into our lifestyle, rather than building our lifestyle around Him.***

- We attend church, but chase the same career ambitions.
- We worship on Sunday, but live for comfort Monday through Saturday.
- We say Jesus is Lord, but functionally live like material gain, popularity, and personal convenience are in charge.

That's not following Jesus. *That's fitting Him in.* And Jesus never said,

“Fit Me into your schedule.”

He said, “*Follow Me.*”

The Death Zone isn’t just about stripping away sin—it’s about surrendering attachment to your old life.

To truly follow Jesus, you have to detach from the valley.

From the world’s pull.

From the need to be liked.

From the obsession with wealth, security, and success.

From the low-altitude version of faith that’s content with blending with the world.

This doesn’t mean living without possessions—it means possessions don’t own you. It doesn’t mean avoiding every cultural norm—it means you no longer conform to them.

You no longer ask, “*How close can I get?*”

You ask, “*How far can I go with Jesus?*”

What Needs to Be Cut Loose?

Imagine your soul like a climber’s harness, and every rope leading down into the world below is a tether:

- To materialism.
- To comparison.
- To selfish ambition.
- To the approval of others.
- To a version of Christianity that doesn’t cost anything.

Now pick up the axe.

Because you can’t climb free until you cut what’s holding you down.

Let go. **Cut the ropes.**

Jesus is better than everything you leave behind.

2

CHECK THE MAP

1 John 2:12-17

¹² *I am writing to you, dear children,
because your sins have been forgiven on account
of his name.*

¹³ *I am writing to you, fathers,
because you know him who is from the beginning.
I am writing to you, young men,
because you have overcome the evil one.*

*¹⁴ I write to you, dear children,
because you know the Father.
I write to you, fathers,
because you know him who is from the beginning.
I write to you, young men,
because you are strong,
and the word of God lives in you,
and you have overcome the evil one.*

*¹⁵ Do not love the world or anything in the world.
If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in
them. ¹⁶ For everything in the world—the lust of the
flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not
from the Father but from the world. ¹⁷ The world and its
desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives
forever.*

3

TRAIL REFLECTIONS

1. What are you most tempted to find your identity or security in—besides Christ?
2. Where has cultural Christianity shaped your faith more than Scripture has?
3. What values of the world still have a grip on your lifestyle, goals, or decisions?

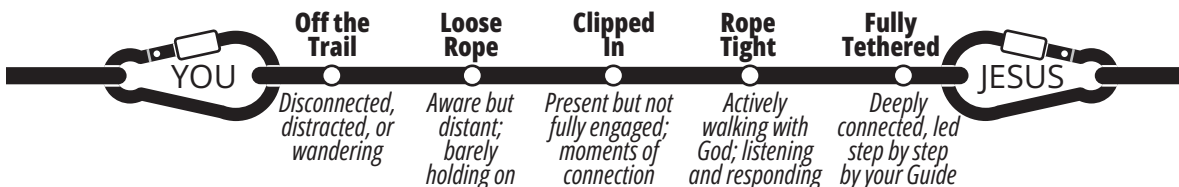
4. What's one thing you need to detach from this week to follow Jesus more fully?

4 ROPE CHECK

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

When Opportunities Open or Close

- Staying humble in success
- Trusting God when a door unexpectedly shuts
- Listening for the Spirit's promptings instead of chasing every open door
- Letting Him define what is "good" and what is "right now"
- Seeing interruptions as invitations



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

33

01 Base Camp - The Call to Climb
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THE UNSEEN SUMMIT

1

WHEN JESUS IS YOUR TREASURE, THE PATH MAKES SENSE

If you've ever climbed a high mountain, you know the disappointment of a *false summit*. You see what looks like the top ahead. You push hard. You celebrate early. But when you get there, you realize it was just a ridge hiding the real peak beyond. The climb isn't over. You're not there yet.

And if your heart was set on arriving, it can be deeply disorienting—even defeating.

That's exactly how the world works.

It keeps offering *false summits*—temporary highs that promise meaning, purpose, and arrival:

- The salary bump.
- The house upgrade.
- The growing platform.
- The next trip, the next relationship, the next season.

But even when you reach it you're still not satisfied. Because it's not the real summit. It's a false peak, an empty promise. You thought you'd arrived, but your soul knows better. Deep inside, you still feel the pull upward. Because you were made for more. You were made for the summit.

But the summit? It's no empty promise. The summit is real—even if unseen. It's a deep, abiding relationship with your Creator that reshapes everything. It's living with your eyes fixed on eternity, where every sacrifice matters, every trial is redeemed, and every unseen act of faith echoes forever. This is the summit your soul was made for—and it's worth every step.

Paul says it clearly:

“Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”

—Colossians 3:2

That's not just poetic language—it's a survival strategy. Because if your eyes stay fixed on what's around you—status, approval, possessions—you'll wear yourself out chasing the next thing. The next high.

The next false summit. And each one leaves you emptier than the last. Only eyes fixed on eternity will carry you to the top.

But if your eyes are set on the eternal, the hard parts of the climb start to make sense. You can endure discomfort, because you know it's not forever. You can say no to temporary rewards, because you're chasing something better. You can stay faithful, even when no one notices, because you know Jesus sees.

“For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.”

—2 Corinthians 4:17

False summits leave you drained, disillusioned, and distracted. They look impressive, but they don't satisfy. They demand your energy, but give little in return. And worse—they tempt you to stop climbing, to settle, to say, *“This is good enough.”*

But Jesus never pointed to the valley and said, *“This will do.”*

He pointed to the cross.

And then to the crown.

“Great is your reward in heaven.” —Matthew 5:12

And,

“Behold, I am coming soon, bringing My reward with Me.” —Revelation 22:12

That's the real summit. And it's worth every step.

So, where are your eyes fixed? Are you discouraged today? Exhausted? Wondering if this life of obedience is even worth it?

Maybe you've just realized—you were aiming for the wrong peak.

But it's not too late to refocus.

Lift your eyes.

Fix your heart.

And remember—you weren't made for the ridge. You were made for the summit. Don't stop short. Keep climbing.

The real summit is still to come.

2

CHECK THE MAP

Colossians 3:1-17

¹ Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above,

not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

⁵ Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. ⁷ You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ⁸ But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. ⁹ Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. ¹¹ Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

¹⁷ And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

3

TRAIL REFLECTIONS

1. What “false summits” has the world used to distract you from living for eternity?

2. Have you ever arrived at something you thought would fulfill you—only to realize it didn't? What did that teach you?

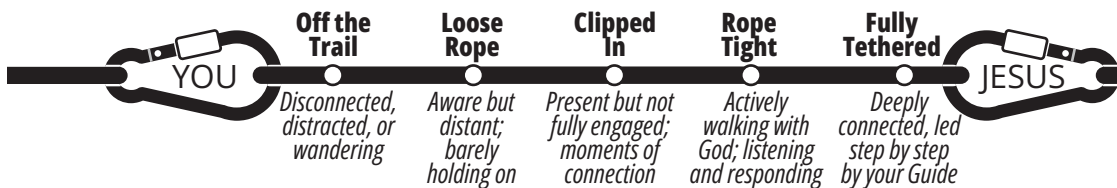
3. What would it look like to “set your mind on things above” in your daily routine?

4 ROPE CHECK

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

How I Handle Correction or Conviction

- Responding with humility, not defensiveness
- Welcoming the Spirit’s pruning
- Thanking God for accountability
- Confessing quickly and sincerely
- Viewing rebuke as God’s kindness



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

34

01 Base Camp - The Call to Climb
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WHAT IF YOU ACTUALLY OBEYED?

1

THE SUMMIT LIFE ISN'T THEORETICAL—IT'S ACTUAL

So much of the Christian life gets stuck in theory.

We read the Bible. We attend the Bible study. We memorize verses and highlight pages. We feel convicted. We nod in agreement.

But then—we stop.

Why? *Because actual obedience costs something.*

It's far easier to admire the climb than it is to actually climb. To talk about the summit than to take the next hard step.

But Jesus didn't say, "*If you agree with Me, you're My disciple.*"

He said:

"If you love Me, keep My commands." —John 14:15

The proof of *agape* love isn't emotion. It's *obedience*. Obedience isn't always dramatic. It's not always public. But it's always real.

It might look like:

- Rolling back to a flip phone over your smartphone because of a hidden sin you've been justifying.
- Having that conversation you've been avoiding.
- Finally surrendering that relationship, career path, or idol.
- Writing the check. Making the call. Opening the door. Saying the yes.

Obedience is always specific. And the Holy Spirit always makes it clear.

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. —James 1:22

Obedience is the path through the Death Zone to the Summit.

At this point in the journey, the climb is steep, but the goal is clear. There's no more room for theoretical faith. This is where it gets real.

You've said Jesus is worth it. You've said He's better than comfort. You've said you want to live by the Spirit, not the flesh.

So now, the question is simple: *What's your next step?*

Not next week. Not next season. Today.
What if you actually obeyed?
You've come too far to turn back now. The trail ahead doesn't require
perfection—just obedience.
Not someday.
Now.

*“Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if
you do them.” —John 13:17*

2

CHECK THE MAP

1 Samuel 15:1-26

¹ Samuel said to Saul, “I am the one the LORD sent to anoint you king over his people Israel; so listen now to the message from the LORD. ² This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. ³ Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy all that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.’”

⁴ So Saul summoned the men and mustered them at Telaim—two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand from Judah. ⁵ Saul went to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the ravine. ⁶ Then he said to the Kenites, “Go away, leave the Amalekites so that I do not destroy you along with them; for you showed kindness to all the Israelites when they came up out of Egypt.” So the Kenites moved away from the Amalekites.

⁷ Then Saul attacked the Amalekites all the way from Havilah to Shur, near the eastern border of Egypt.

⁸ He took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and all his people he totally destroyed with the sword. ⁹ But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs—everything that was good. These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed.

¹⁰ Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel: ¹¹ “I regret that I have made Saul king, because he has turned

away from me and has not carried out my instructions.” Samuel was angry, and he cried out to the LORD all that night.

¹² *Early in the morning Samuel got up and went to meet Saul, but he was told, “Saul has gone to Carmel. There he has set up a monument in his own honor and has turned and gone on down to Gilgal.”*

¹³ *When Samuel reached him, Saul said, “The LORD bless you! I have carried out the LORD’s instructions.”*

¹⁴ *But Samuel said, “What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears? What is this lowing of cattle that I hear?”*

¹⁵ *Saul answered, “The soldiers brought them from the Amalekites; they spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the LORD your God, but we totally destroyed the rest.”*

¹⁶ *“Enough!” Samuel said to Saul. “Let me tell you what the LORD said to me last night.”*

“Tell me,” Saul replied.

¹⁷ *Samuel said, “Although you were once small in your own eyes, did you not become the head of the tribes of Israel? The LORD anointed you king over Israel. ¹⁸ And he sent you on a mission, saying, ‘Go and completely destroy those wicked people, the Amalekites; wage war against them until you have wiped them out.’ ¹⁹ Why did you not obey the LORD? Why did you pounce on the plunder and do evil in the eyes of the LORD?”*

²⁰ *“But I did obey the LORD,” Saul said. “I went on the mission the LORD assigned me. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king. ²¹ The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the LORD your God at Gilgal.”*

²² *But Samuel replied:*

*“Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the LORD?
To obey is better than sacrifice,
and to heed is better than the fat of rams.*

²³ *For rebellion is like the sin of divination,
and arrogance like the evil of idolatry.
Because you have rejected the word of the LORD,
he has rejected you as king.”*

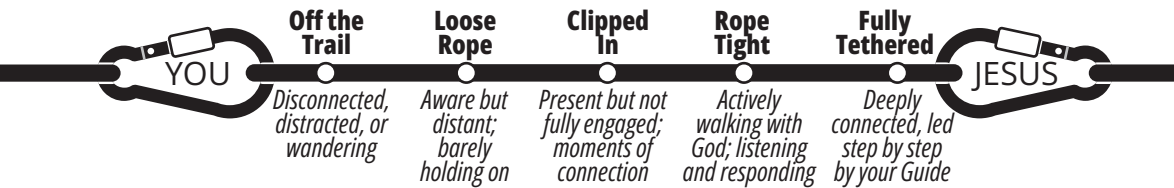
4

ROPE CHECK

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

Worship & Posture Toward God

- Honoring God with my attention, not just my words
- Staying reverent when prayer feels routine
- Choosing awe over apathy
- Letting worship be a lifestyle, not just music
- Pursuing intimacy with God, not just information about Him



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

35

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REFLECTION & REST - BURN THE MAPS

1

IT'S TIME TO SAY GOODBYE TO THE OLD LIFE

This week you stepped into *the Death Zone*—not to die in despair, but to die to self...

And to live fully for Jesus.

You've faced the comforts that held you back. You've named the false summits. You've evaluated what you cling to—and what you've released.

And you've been asked again and again: *What is Jesus worth to you?*

Today, before pressing on, it's time to pause.

Not to push.

Not to plan.

But to reflect—and rest in His presence.

Because you weren't called to follow from a distance. You were called to go all in.

Burn the Maps

When old explorers passed the point of no return, they'd burn the maps that led them back.

Why?

Because the only way forward was forward.

No backup plan.

No safe path home.

Just bold, surrendered obedience.

That's what this day is about.

No more spiritual sightseeing. No more admiring Jesus from a distance. This is your "burn the maps" moment.

You were never called to follow halfway.

The summit isn't for the casual or the curious.

It's for the surrendered.

Burn the maps. Shoulder your cross.

And keep climbing. *He is worth it.*

Joshua 24:1-15

¹ Then Joshua assembled all the tribes of Israel at Shechem. He summoned the elders, leaders, judges and officials of Israel, and they presented themselves before God.

² Joshua said to all the people, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘Long ago your ancestors, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the Euphrates River and worshiped other gods.

³ But I took your father Abraham from the land beyond the Euphrates and led him throughout Canaan and gave him many descendants. I gave him Isaac, ⁴ and to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. I assigned the hill country of Seir to Esau, but Jacob and his family went down to Egypt.

⁵ “Then I sent Moses and Aaron, and I afflicted the Egyptians by what I did there, and I brought you out.

⁶ When I brought your people out of Egypt, you came to the sea, and the Egyptians pursued them with chariots and horsemen as far as the Red Sea. ⁷ But they cried to the Lord for help, and he put darkness between you and the Egyptians; he brought the sea over them and covered them. You saw with your own eyes what I did to the Egyptians. Then you lived in the wilderness for a long time.

⁸ “I brought you to the land of the Amorites who lived east of the Jordan. They fought against you, but I gave them into your hands. I destroyed them from before you, and you took possession of their land. ⁹ When Balak son of Zippor, the king of Moab, prepared to fight against Israel, he sent for Balaam son of Beor to put a curse on you. ¹⁰ But I would not listen to Balaam, so he blessed you again and again, and I delivered you out of his hand.

¹¹ “Then you crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho. The citizens of Jericho fought against you, as did also the Amorites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hittites, Girgashites, Hivites and Jebusites, but I gave them into your hands.

¹² I sent the hornet ahead of you, which drove them out before you—also the two Amorite kings. You did not do

it with your own sword and bow. ¹³ So I gave you a land on which you did not toil and cities you did not build; and you live in them and eat from vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant.

¹⁴ “Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. ¹⁵ But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.

3

INSTRUCTIONS FOR TODAY: BURN THE MAPS

Today is not about going further—it’s about going deeper. This is your moment to pause, reflect, and fully surrender.

- 1. Find a quiet place.** Make space to meet with the Lord—undistracted and unhurried. Bring your Bible, a piece of blank paper, and something to write or sketch with.
- 2. Draw your “map from the summit back to the valley.”**

On a blank sheet of paper, draw a symbolic map that represents the path back to your old life—the version of Christianity that was safe, convenient, and comfortable.

Include things like:

- Backup plans you’ve kept in case full obedience gets too risky
- Compromises you’ve justified.
- Escape routes you’ve run to when the call of Jesus feels too costly.
- Comforts you’re tempted to cling to instead of the cross.

Label the landmarks with honesty—fear, control, security, people-pleasing, materialism, comfort, status, or anything else the Spirit brings to mind.

- 3. Name what still needs to die.**

On the same page or in your journal, write a list of anything you’re still holding back.

Be real. Don’t sugarcoat it. These are the things keeping you teth-

ered to the valley.

4. Write your commitment.

Somewhere on the map, write a declaration like:

“Jesus, I’m done looking back. No backup plan. No half-hearted faith. I burn the maps today. You are my summit—and I will follow You wherever You lead.”

5. Burn the map.

Safely and symbolically—if possible—burn the map. (*If you can’t do that literally due to a burn ban or safety, tear it up and throw it away. Make it memorable.*)

As the paper disappears, let it represent your complete surrender. No return. No retreat. No more split allegiances.

6. Write out a prayer on the rest of this page.

Not for ease—but for endurance.

Not for blessing—but for boldness.

Not for comfort—but for courage to obey—fully and finally.

Week 6

BASECAMP BRIEFING

Don't climb alone. Meet weekly with a spiritual coach—someone farther along in the journey. Use questions from each section of this talk sheet to reflect, pray, and grow together.

GEAR CHECK

1

1. What areas of your heart did God reveal this week that still need to be surrendered?
2. Have you been holding on to any “comfort gear” that’s keeping you from climbing higher?
3. What spiritual practices helped you stay focused or challenged you to go deeper?
4. **How would you describe your current readiness to go “all in” for Christ?**

WEATHER REPORT

2

1. What was the spiritual “climate” of your week?



TRAIL CONDITIONS

3

1. Which day of this week’s readings hit you hardest—and why?
2. **What was your reaction to entering the Death Zone? What do you need to die to in your life?**
3. Was there anything especially difficult or sobering about this week’s content?

CLIFFSIDE MOMENTS

4

1. **Where did you wrestle most with dying to this week in your daily life?**
2. Did anything happen this week that tested your willingness to trust Jesus fully?
3. What did you learn about the difference between saying “Jesus is Lord” and living like it?
4. Was there a moment this week when you chose surrender instead of self?

SUMMIT GLIMPSES

5

1. Did you see a clearer picture of what a surrendered life looks like in Jesus?
2. **What Scripture helped open your eyes to God's call for total surrender?**
3. Was there a moment when you felt hope, peace, or resolve as you read this week?

KNOTS AND TANGLES

6

1. What's still hard for you to understand about dying to self or denying comfort?
2. Are there specific fears or hesitations keeping you from full obedience?
3. **How was the call to give generously or sacrificially challenge your thinking?**

MAP & COMPASS

7

1. **Did this week's Trail Marker stay with you—and if so, how?**
2. How did you apply that verse in moments of challenge or decision?
3. Did it offer clarity, correction, or comfort?
4. How can you carry this verse into next week's descent into Summit Life?

ROUTE PLANNING

8

1. What's one step you know God is calling you to take—but you've been resisting?
2. How can you follow through on what God showed you this week?
3. **Are there practical changes—financial, relational, spiritual—you need to make?**
4. How can I pray for boldness and obedience in your next step?

PRAYER AROUND THE FIRE

9

1. Write down each other's prayer requests and pray.

Week 6

THE SUMMIT: LIVING FOR THE CAUSE

THE SUMMIT
Living for The Cause

TRAIL MARKER—A guiding memory verse to mark your path this week.

MATTHEW 28:19-20

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”



“Climb the mountain not to plant your flag, but to embrace the challenge, enjoy the air and behold the view. Climb it so you can see the world, not so the world can see you.”

—David McCullough Jr.

36

01 Base Camp - The Call to Climb
02 Camp 2 - Salvation & Identity
03 Camp 3 - The Flesh Within
04 Camp 4 - Ascent Power
05 Camp 5 - The Death Zone
06 The Summit - Living for The Cause



VIEWING THE CAUSE

1

FROM THE SUMMIT, YOU FINALLY SEE IT— THE REASON FOR THE CLIMB

You made it.

The climb has been steep, costly, and at times painful—but now you stand at the summit. And from here, you can finally see what this journey has been all about.

You look out and see the winding trail that brought you here—the layers of surrender, the battles with the flesh, the breakthrough of walking in the Spirit. But when you turn outward, the view widens—and you see the world below.

The valleys are full. People wander without purpose, caught in the shadows of sin, fear, and spiritual blindness. They're trapped—and they don't even realize it.

And that's when it hits you:

This climb wasn't just for you.

It was also for them.

That's why Jesus said to his disciples:

I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest —John 4:35b

He wasn't pointing to wheat. He was pointing to souls. To people ready—desperate—for hope. That's what you see from the summit: *a broken world*. A ripe harvest. And a calling too great to ignore.

This is the view that fuels the mission. Your purpose. *The Cause*.

What Is The Cause?

Jesus didn't just call His disciples to follow Him—He led them up the mountain of discipleship. Step by step, He trained them, challenged them, transformed them. And in Matthew 28, as they stood with Him on the summit of the Mount of Olives, He gave them His final words. Not a goodbye—but a commissioning.

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore

go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” —Matthew 28:18-20

From that high place, overlooking the very world they were about to reach, Jesus entrusted them with His mission: “Go and make disciples of all nations.” This was more than a mission—it was a movement. A calling bigger than themselves. A purpose that would carry the gospel to the ends of the earth—generation after generation.

Centuries later, missionaries like William Carey and Hudson Taylor would call this the “Great Commission”—a rally cry that launched thousands of men and women across oceans, jungles, deserts, and unreached lands in pursuit of that original command.

In our generation, Greg Stier of *Dare2Share Ministries*^{*} coined a new name to capture that ancient call in a language today’s church can rally around:

The Cause: To make disciples who make disciples.

This is The Cause Jesus gave on the mountain.

This is The Cause you’ve been climbing toward.

This is The Cause you now see with new eyes from the summit.

Today, people are passionate about causes. Save the whales. Fight injustice. End poverty. Take care of the planet. All good. All noble. But only one *Cause* holds eternal consequences:

The gospel of Jesus Christ—shared, lived, and multiplied through disciple-making.

This is the greatest cause ever entrusted to mankind. And now—it’s your turn to carry it forward. You’ve climbed to this point not just to celebrate, but to be sent. Not to admire the view, but to answer the call. This is *The Cause*—the highest calling. And it’s waiting for your “yes.”

We’ve spent weeks shedding weight, cutting ties, dealing with the flesh, walking in the spirit, but all of that has led to this view.

Just like on a real mountain, the view from the top changes everything.

- You can see the path you climbed—the cost, the transformation, the miracles.
- You can see the depth of the canyons—the places you were once

* Greg Stier and *Dare2Share Ministries* has numerous resources and tools for evangelism at Dare2Share.org.

trapped.

- And most importantly, you can see the valleys still full of people—searching, stuck, and spiritually starving.

The summit doesn't exist so we can camp in glory. It exists to give us vision—so we can descend with purpose and help others find the trail up. That's *The Cause* Jesus called us to.

“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

—Matthew 5:14–16

So, we come to one of the most important questions of this entire book: ***What will you do with what you see?***

This is your turning point. Not to retreat—but to join *The Cause*.

You've seen the summit. Now it's time to help others get there too. The summit isn't the end of the journey—it's the start of the mission. From here, you can finally see what's at stake.

This is *The Cause*. This is your call. Don't just stand at the top. Return to the valley—and bring others with you.

2

CHECK THE MAP

John 4:4-35

⁴ Now he had to go through Samaria. ⁵ So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

⁷ When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” ⁸ (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

¹⁰ Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”

¹¹ “Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?”

¹³ Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

¹⁵ The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”

¹⁶ He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.”

¹⁷ “I have no husband,” she replied.

Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸ The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.”

¹⁹ “Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

²¹ “Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”

²⁵ The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

²⁶ Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”

²⁷ Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?”

²⁸ Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ²⁹ “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” ³⁰ They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

³¹ Meanwhile his disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat something.”

³² But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.”

³³ Then his disciples said to each other, “Could someone have brought him food?”

³⁴ “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. ³⁵ Don’t you have a saying, ‘It’s still four months until harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.

3

TRAIL REFLECTIONS

1. When you look at the world around you, where do you see the greatest spiritual need?

2. How has the climb prepared you to reach others who are still in the valley?

3. Have you viewed the gospel as a personal belief or a cause worth living—and dying—for?

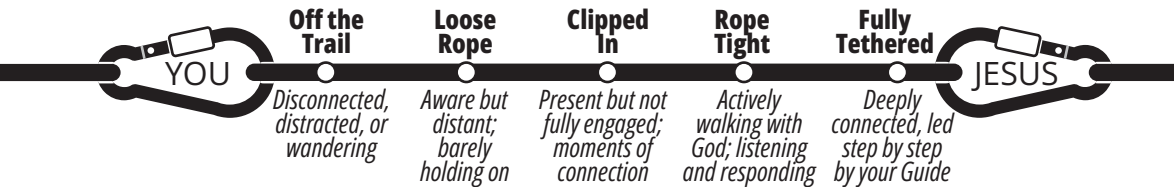
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ROPE CHECK

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

Goals, Ambitions, and Dreams

- Surrendering dreams that may not be from Him
- Asking God to shape your definition of success
- Being okay with anonymity if it's His will
- Aligning career or ministry goals with Kingdom purpose
- Seeking His “well done” more than the applause of others



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

37

01 Base Camp - The Call to Climb
02 Camp 2 – Salvation & Identity
03 Camp 3 – The Flesh Within
04 Camp 4 – Ascent Power
05 Camp 5 - The Death Zone
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ECHOES IN THE CANYONS

1 THERE ARE VOICES CRYING OUT FROM THE VALLEY— CAN YOU HEAR THEM?

You've reached the summit.
You've seen the glory.
You've heard the call.
And now—it's time to descend.

But you're not the same person who began this climb. You've spent 40 days learning to follow Jesus—dying to self, walking by the Spirit, laying down comfort, and taking up your cross.

Now, as you make your way back down into the valley, you carry something different: *clarity*, *conviction*, and *The Cause*.

As you descend, it's not because the mountain isn't worth it, but rather because the valley is full of people who haven't found the trail yet. And while you were climbing, the echoes of their brokenness never stopped ringing.

- The voice of a friend searching for truth.
- The cry of a classmate drowning in anxiety.
- The silence of a neighbor numb with pain.
- The questions behind someone's sarcasm, anger, or apathy.

From the summit, you can hear them clearly. And now, you have a choice:

Stay where it's safe, or descend with purpose.

There was a moment when Jesus stood on a literal mountaintop, wrapped in glory. At the Transfiguration (Matthew 17), Jesus stood with Moses and Elijah, His face shining like the sun, His clothes radiating light. And in that moment, He was in direct fellowship with His Father—surrounded by divine affirmation and heavenly glory.

It was a summit moment—pure, powerful, holy.

Peter wanted to stay there, to build shelters, to camp in the glory. But Jesus knew mountaintop experiences aren't meant for settling in—*they're meant for strengthening you for the valley.*

So He came down.

He left the mountain, walked back into the noise, the need, and the chaos—knowing that the cross awaited Him.

He chose to descend. And in Matthew 9, we see why:

“When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” —Matthew 9:36

The word *compassion* in that verse isn't passive. It means He was moved in the depths of His being. His heart broke for them—so He stepped toward them.

That's the heart of disciple-makers. We don't stay at the top. We go back down.

And now, this is your calling—to become a disciple-maker.

You've taken the climb. Over the past 40 days, you've been disciplined—you've learned what it means to truly follow Jesus.

Now it's time to descend into the valley, not as a spectator, but as a guide—a coach.

Find a fellow journeyer—someone who hasn't taken the climb—and walk with them step by step and coach them to move closer to Christ. Because this climb was never just for your transformation. It was preparing you—for theirs.

Jesus didn't call you to climb just to stay on the summit. He called you to be transformed, and then go courageously.

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...”
—Matthew 28:19

The world is full of canyons—deep places of confusion, addiction, fear, and spiritual lostness. And from where you're standing now, you see it. You feel it.

And you have been equipped to do something about it.

- You were rescued to become a rescuer.
- You were reached to become a reacher.
- You were disciplined to become a disciple-maker.

This is *The Cause*—and now it's personal.

People are trapped in sin, confusion, fear, and spiritual darkness all around you. They're your classmates, your coworkers, your neighbors. They may even be Christians who attend church with you, but they've never been disciplined.

They don't need another inspirational quote—they need someone to walk with them toward Jesus.

And here's the truth:
That someone is you.

Making Disciples is Not Just a Command for the “Professionals.”

There's something critical to notice about Jesus' words in *The Cause* (i.e., the Great Commission) found in Matthew 28:18–20:

- Jesus did not say, “*Therefore, pastors go and make disciples...*”
- Jesus did not say, “*Therefore, missionaries go and make disciples...*”
- Jesus did not say, “*Therefore, only the ultra-spiritual go and make disciples...*”

No—He spoke those words to ordinary followers.
Just like you.

At most churches, disciple-making is often left to the pastors, staff, and leaders. But that's not the model Jesus gave. He designed a movement where every disciple becomes a disciple-maker.

Just like a mature human being reproduces life, a mature follower of Jesus reproduces spiritual life in others.

So this isn't just about serving.

This is about finding a follower—someone to intentionally walk with, invest in, and help grow in Christ.

Someone to climb with.

Who is it for you?

- A student younger in the faith?
- A friend asking hard questions?
- A new believer who feels stuck?
- Someone at church that God puts on your heart?
- Someone who's watching your life, hungry for more?

Find them. Reach them. Walk with them. Coach them. Climb with them.

You were never meant to stay at the summit. You were meant to go back down and bring someone up with you.

This is what disciple-makers do.

And now—it's your turn.

2 CHECK THE MAP

Philippians 2:1-11

¹ *Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love,*

if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion,² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

*⁶ Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to
be used to his own advantage;*

*⁷ rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.*

*⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!*

*⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,*

*¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,*

*¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ
is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

3

TRAIL REFLECTIONS

1. Have you ever believed that making disciples was only for pastors, missionaries, or ministry leaders? How does that belief need to change?

2. What “excuses” or hesitations have kept you from stepping into this role—and what would it look like to surrender them today?

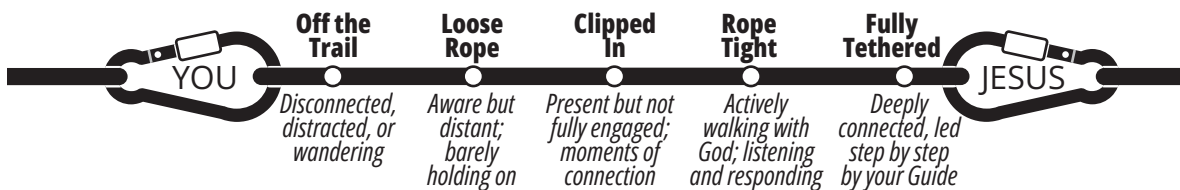
- Who in your life is spiritually lost, stuck, or searching—and could be your “fellow journeyer”? *Begin praying whether or not God might have you reach out to ask them to go through this book with you.*

4 ROPE CHECK

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

Celebration & Success

- Giving God glory when things go well
- Staying humble and grateful in victory
- Resisting pride or self-credit
- Enjoying blessings without idolizing them
- Recognizing that joy is fuel for the climb



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

38

01 Base Camp - The Call to Climb
02 Camp 2 - Salvation & Identity
03 Camp 3 - The Flesh Within
04 Camp 4 - Ascent Power
05 Camp 5 - The Death Zone
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THE CAUSE IS THE CLIMB

1

DISCIPLESHIP AND EVANGELISM AREN'T SEPARATE PATHS—THEY'RE THE SAME ROPE

It's tempting to think the climb is over. You've reached the summit. You've been transformed. But the truth is—the climb is just beginning.

Jesus didn't save you to settle. He didn't disciple you so you could camp at the top and admire the view. He saved you so you could bring others up. *Because in God's Kingdom, discipleship and evangelism aren't two trails—they're one rope.*

You don't become a disciple and then figure out later how to share your faith. You grow, and you go. You follow Jesus, and you help others follow Him too.

This is *The Cause*.

This is the climb.

Your story is the rope that God can use to pull others up. Your journey with Jesus hasn't just shaped you—it's equipped you. You now have a story, a testimony, a reason for your hope. And someone near you needs to hear it.

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have...

—1 Peter 3:15

You don't have to know everything.

You don't have to have a theology degree.

You just need to be real about how Jesus has changed your life—and why He's worth everything.

The Cause—the Great Commission in Matthew 28—isn't a one-time trip or a mission trip check-box. It's not a line on your spiritual résumé. It's a lifelong calling. This isn't about going somewhere once; it's about living sent everywhere, every day.

It's a daily mindset—a life that says:

"Everywhere I go, I'm on mission."

"Every conversation could be a seed planted."

"Every relationship is a discipleship opportunity."

The Cause is a lifestyle—not an event.

- **Evangelism** is simply opening your mouth with boldness and love.
- **Discipleship** is walking with someone long enough to help them grow.

Did you notice?

This book has equipped you to do both.

This isn't just a devotional—it's a climbing tool. A belay rope you can use, along with your own story and the power of the Holy Spirit, to walk with someone closer to Jesus.

All you have to do is say:

***“Hey, I just read this book, and it really impacted me.
Would you want to go through it with me?”***

Then, invite them to read it daily—just like you did.

Meet once a week to debrief the journey together using the Base Camp Briefings.

Pray, process, and keep climbing—side by side.

That's discipleship.

That's evangelism.

That's *The Cause* in motion.

So, who Are You Bringing With You? You don't have to reach the whole world by yourself. But you are called to reach your world.

- Your team.
- Your classmates.
- Your friend group.
- Your coworkers.
- Your siblings.
- Your neighbors.

The Cause isn't a spiritual career—it's a personal commitment. And it's the continuation of the climb.

2

CHECK THE MAP

1 Peter 3:8-22

⁸ Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. ⁹ Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. ¹⁰ For,

*“Whoever would love life
and see good days
must keep their tongue from evil
and their lips from deceitful speech.*

*¹¹ They must turn from evil and do good;
they must seek peace and pursue it.*

*¹² For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous
and his ears are attentive to their prayer,
but the face of the Lord is against those who do
evil.”*

¹³ Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.” ¹⁵ But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. ¹⁷ For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. ¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. ¹⁹ After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits—²⁰ to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, ²¹ and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²² who has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

3

TRAIL REFLECTIONS

1. How have you seen your faith grow over the past 38 days—and how does that shape how you talk about Jesus now?

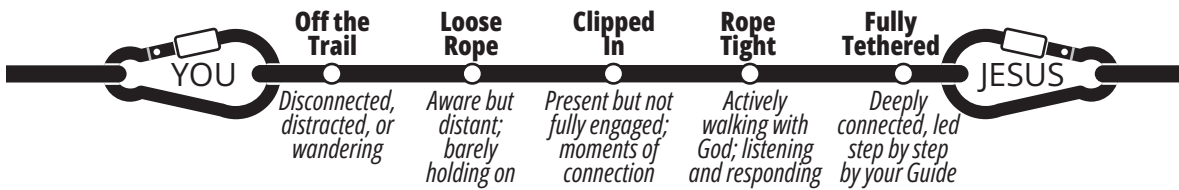
- Who in your life needs to hear your story—and how can you start that conversation this week?

4 ROPE CHECK

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

Reputation & Identity in the World

- Not being ruled by what others think
- Staying true to Christ when your faith is misunderstood
- Being bold without being arrogant
- Letting your life preach the gospel before your words do
- Embracing being “set apart”



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

39

01 Base Camp - The Call to Climb
02 Camp 2 - Salvation & Identity
03 Camp 3 - The Flesh Within
04 Camp 4 - Ascent Power
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THE DESCENT IS A PART OF THE CLIMB

1

THE DESCENT LAUNCHES YOU INTO LIVING THE CAUSE

The summit was never the end—it was the turning point.

And now, as you begin your descent back into the valley, everything is different.

You've been changed.

You've surrendered.

You've walked through the hardest parts of the climb—learning to follow Jesus, die to yourself, live by the Spirit, and join *The Cause*. And now you go back to the valley—not as the person you were, but as someone transformed by the mountain.

If you've ever hiked or climbed, you know the descent uses different muscles. Going downhill can seem easier—but it demands balance, control, and focus.

It's not about coasting.

It's about moving forward with purpose and strength.

And here's the beautiful part: *you pick up momentum*.

You move faster, more freely. Why? Because you're lighter now. You've left things behind. You're no longer climbing for yourself—you're carrying a cause:

*“As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you.” —John
20:21*

You're not going back down to rest. You're going to rescue. To live sent. To lead others up.

The past 39 days weren't just spiritual inspiration—they were spiritual preparation. You've trained your ears to hear His voice. You've trained your heart to walk in step with the Spirit.

And now you're being launched into everyday life with gospel intentionality. This isn't about trying harder. This is about walking in the strength He's already built into you.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and

in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”
—Acts 1:8

The descent is a part of the climb—it carries into your neighborhood, your classroom, your workplace, your friend group, your home.

You’re not the same.

And neither will be the places you go—because you’re bringing Jesus with you.

The Cause isn’t an emotional high. It’s not a season. It’s not a phase. It’s a way of life—and the trail ahead is full of people waiting for hope.

You’ve climbed. You’ve changed. Now go back down and bring someone else up with you.

And who is that person? Who has the Holy Spirit been bringing to your mind over these past few days?

That name that keeps resurfacing in your heart?

That person you know is stuck, searching, or spiritually hungry.

That’s not a coincidence. That’s God speaking to you.

So do something about it—right now.

Seriously. Put this book down—right now.

Text them—right now.

Invite them to coffee. Ask if they’d be open to going on a journey with you. Bring your copy of this book—or better yet, bring the extra one you picked up just for them.

Look them in the eye and say:

“This book changed my life. I’d love to go through it with you.”

You don’t need to have all the answers.

You just need to be available.

Because the climb doesn’t stop here.

It continues through you—and the person you’re about to invite.

2

CHECK THE MAP

Acts 16:1-15

¹ Paul came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was Jewish and a believer but whose father was a Greek.

² The believers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him.

³ Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

⁴ As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. ⁵ So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

⁶ Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. ⁷ When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. ⁸ So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. ⁹ During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” ¹⁰ After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

¹¹ From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis.

¹² From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

¹³ On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. ¹⁴ One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message. ¹⁵ When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. “If you consider me a believer in the Lord,” she said, “come and stay at my house.” And she persuaded us.

3

TRAIL REFLECTIONS

1. Who has the Holy Spirit been bringing to your mind during this journey? Don’t dismiss it. That name matters. Why do you think God keeps putting them on your heart?

2. Have you taken a step yet to invite someone into discipleship? If not, what's holding you back? What would it look like to act in faith—today?

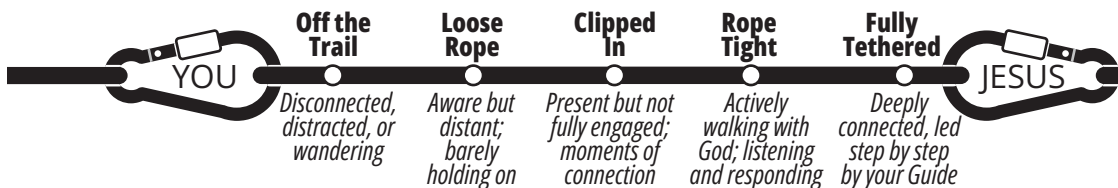
3. What could it look like to go through this book again—with someone else?

4 ROPE CHECK

Looking back on the past week, how strong has your connection been to Jesus in this area? (Mark the circle that best describes your level of connection.)

Influence & Leadership

- Leading from overflow, not burnout
- Serving people without seeking credit
- Letting God correct pride, comparison, or envy
- Submitting your leadership to His authority
- Staying grounded in humility when people follow you



Then, pause and pray—asking Jesus to give you the strength and focus to stay closely connected to Him in this area over the next week.

40

01 Base Camp - The Call to Climb
02 Camp 2 - Salvation & Identity
03 Camp 3 - The Flesh Within
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REFLECTION & REST - FOR THE SAKE OF THE VALLEY

1

YOU WERE SAVED ON THIS MOUNTAIN FOR THE SAKE OF THOSE STILL BELOW

Congratulations! You've reached the final day of this 40-day journey. You've climbed with Jesus—through surrender, through struggle, through transformation. You've stood at the summit and seen the world through His eyes.

Today is a day to pause—again.

Not because the mission is over, but because your heart needs to settle in the truth: *this climb was never just about you.*

Back on Day 3, you were introduced to *the Discipleship Continuum*—a visual reminder that every person is on a journey either toward or away from Jesus.

We learned that everyone is found somewhere along this continuum:

1. **Hostile to Jesus** – *Actively resisting Him.*
2. **Open to Jesus** – *Searching, curious, or exploring.*
3. **Found Jesus** – *Saved, but still learning the basics of the faith.*
4. **Following Jesus** – *Growing, surrendering, and learning to live more like Him.*

You identified where you were.

You saw where others might be.

And you were challenged to find someone to walk with—someone to help take one step closer to Christ.

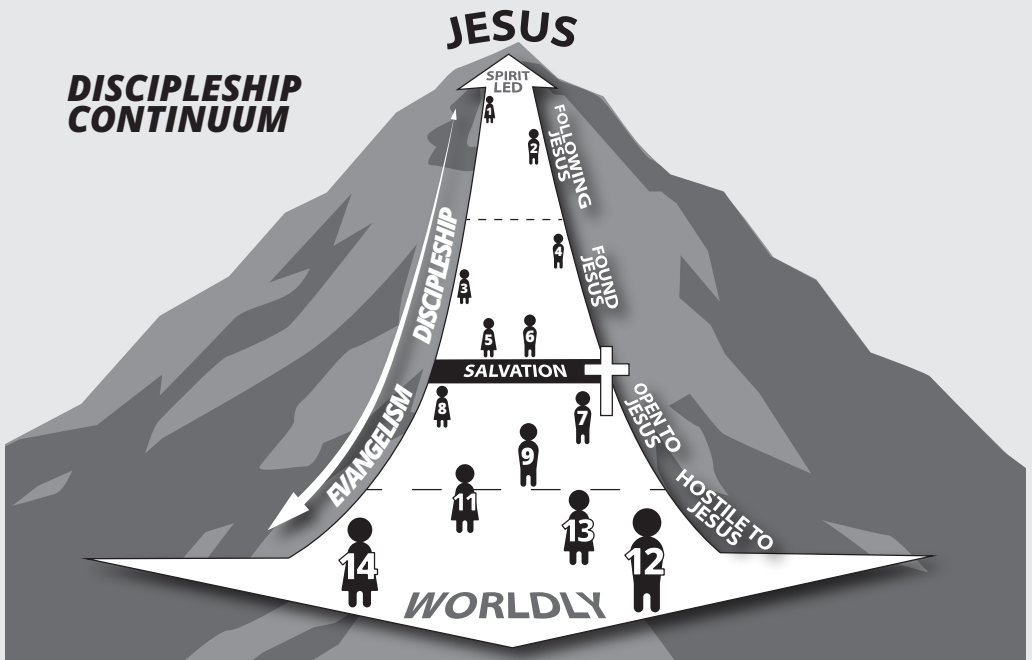
Now, 40 days later, you're not the same person who stood at the base of that trail. You've climbed. You've surrendered. You've listened. You've been changed. And you've been descending with clarity.

Because you weren't just called to move forward—you were called to reach back. The climb prepared you—the valley needs you

There are people in your life right now stuck in confusion, compromise, or pain.

They may not even know they're lost.

They're scattered along that same continuum—and they need someone who's walked the trail to help them find their footing.



That someone is you.

Your heart is meant to beat with the same purpose that drove the Apostle Paul—to glorify Jesus by reaching people with the gospel.

He said,

I have become all things to all people, so that by all possible means I might save some —1 Corinthians 9:22

That’s not just his mission. It’s yours.

You’ve been discipled.

Now you’re being sent—as a disciple-maker.

2

CHECK THE MAP

1 Corinthians 9:16-27

¹⁶ Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It For when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!¹⁷ If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me.¹⁸ What then is my reward? Just this: that in preaching the gospel I may offer it free of charge, and so not make full use of my rights as a preacher of the gospel.

¹⁹ Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible.

²⁰ To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To

those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. ²¹ To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. ²² To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. ²³ I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

²⁴ Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. ²⁵ Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. ²⁶ Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. ²⁷ No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

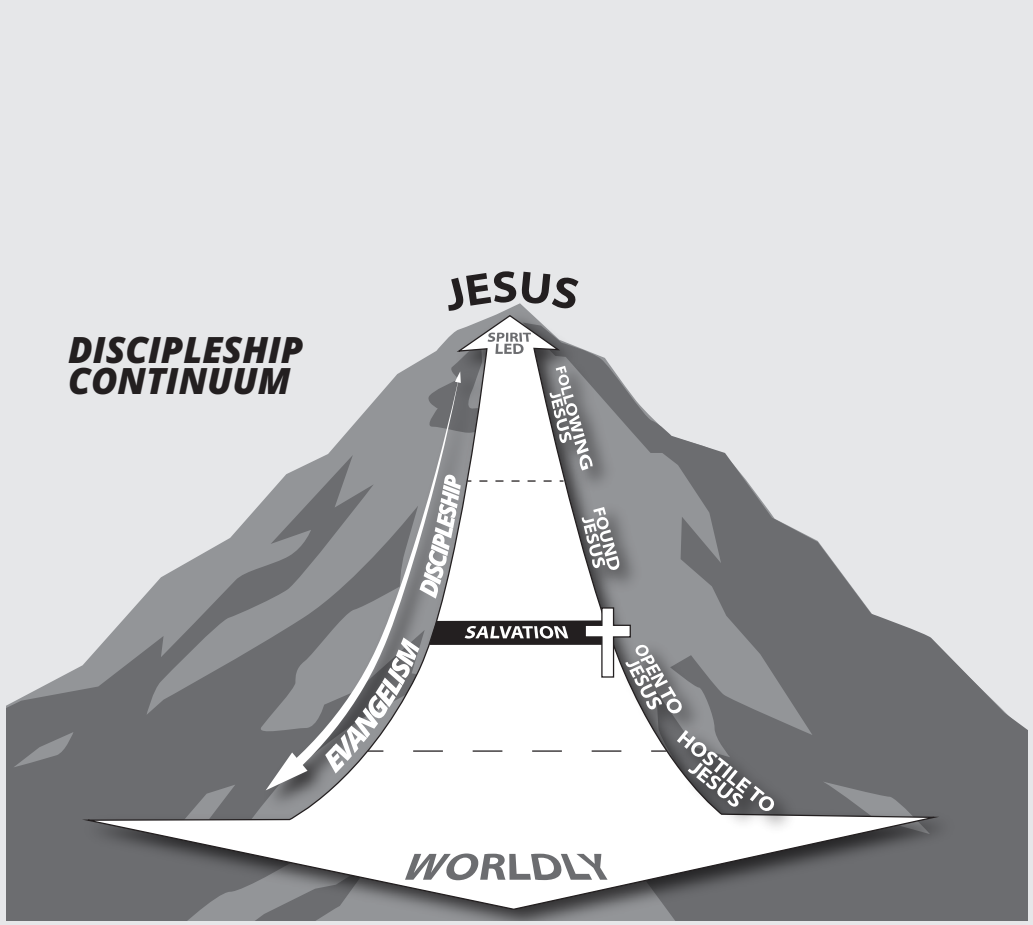
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INSTRUCTIONS FOR TODAY: REAL GROWTH

1. **Find a quiet place.** Make space to meet with the Lord—undistracted and unhurried.
2. **Return to your Day 3 continuum drawing.** Look again. Revisit what you wrote and how you evaluated your walk at that point in the journey.

Ask yourself honestly: Was that an honest evaluation? Where am I now? What's shifted? What has God grown in me?

3. **On the next page you'll find a blank continuum chart.**
 - Draw where you would be today after this 40 day journey.
 - Then draw one or two people you believe God is calling you to walk with.
4. **Pray for them by name.** Ask God to give you compassion, courage, and clarity.
5. **Tear this page out and post it somewhere you'll see every day—**as a daily reminder of your commitment and a prompt to pray for the people God's placed on your heart.





Final Meeting

BASECAMP BRIEFING

Don't climb alone. Meet weekly with a spiritual coach—someone farther along in the journey. Use questions from each section of this talk sheet to reflect, pray, and grow together.

GEAR CHECK

1

1. How has your heart changed from Day 1 to now?
2. What has God shown you about your strengths—and how He wants to use them?
3. **Looking back over the climb, what tools do you feel you've added to your spiritual pack?**
4. Do you feel ready to begin helping others climb? Why or why not?

WEATHER REPORT

2

1. How would you describe the “climate” of your faith?



TRAIL CONDITIONS

3

1. Which day's reading challenged or inspired you most this week—and why?
2. Did any concept—like disciple-making or descending for others—feel new or intimidating?
3. **How did the vision of “The Cause” reshape how you view your daily life?**

CLIFFSIDE MOMENTS

4

1. **Where do you feel resistance when it comes to sharing your faith or discipling others?**
2. What fears or insecurities surfaced as you considered your role in The Cause?
3. Was there a moment this week when you sensed God nudging you to act—but hesitated?
4. What step of faith are you most nervous to take?

SUMMIT GLIMPSES

5

1. Which Scripture this week gave you a glimpse of your role in God's mission?
2. How did God's Word help you see people differently—or see your calling more clearly?
3. What passage felt like a personal commission or challenge to your heart?
4. **How has your vision of your purpose grown since starting this 40-day journey?**

MAP & COMPASS

7

1. **Did this week's Trail Marker (Matthew 9:37) take on new meaning for you?**
2. How does it challenge you to think differently about your daily life?
3. What other verses from this journey are you carrying with you now?
4. How might you use these Scriptures to encourage someone else?

KNOTS AND TANGLES

6

1. **What questions do you still have about making disciples or sharing your faith?**
2. What parts of The Cause feel overwhelming or unclear?
3. Do you struggle with the idea that God can use you to impact others?
4. What's still holding you back from taking action?

ROUTE PLANNING

8

1. **Who is one person God has brought to mind that you could disciple?**
2. What's your next step in living out The Cause—this week?
3. **Is there someone you want to invite to go through this book with you?**
4. What new rhythms or commitments do you want to keep as you descend?

PRAYER AROUND THE FIRE

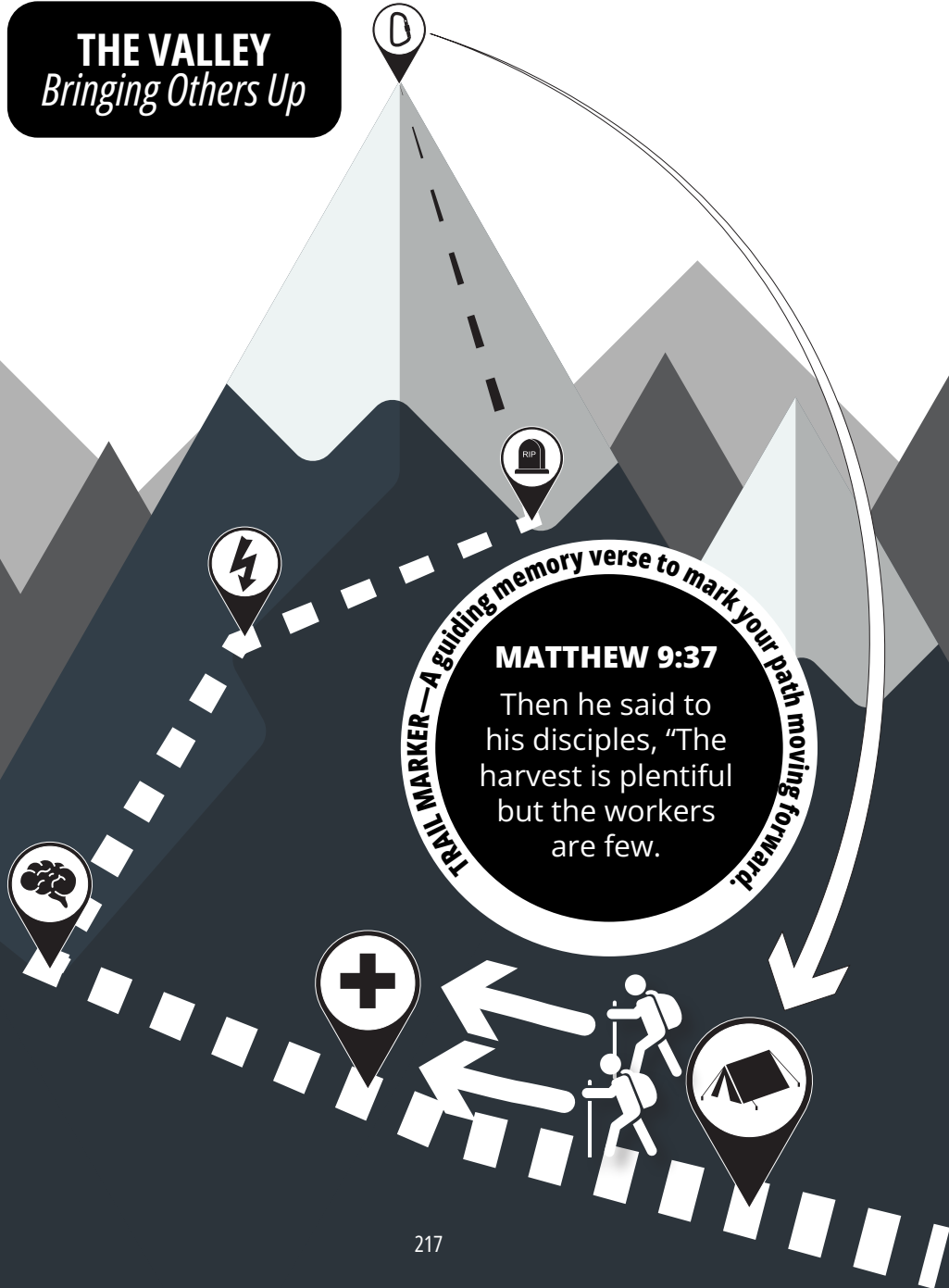
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1. **Write down each other's prayer requests and pray.**

Next Step

THE VALLEY: BRINGING OTHERS UP

THE VALLEY
Bringing Others Up



“On life and peaks it is the same.
With strength we win the grail, but
courage is the thing we need to
face the downward trail.”

—Jacob Clifford Moomaw
*mountain guide, National Park
Service Ranger, and author*



EPILOGUE

What now?

*You weren't rescued to rest—you were wired to make a difference.
God saved you for a purpose, and it's time to step into it.*

You've climbed. You've surrendered. You've faced your flesh, walked by the Spirit, discovered the power of the gospel, and caught a vision for *The Cause*. You've stood on the summit of discipleship and begun the descent with a heart that beats for the valley below.

But the journey doesn't stop here. In fact, this is where your personal calling begins. The last 40 days weren't just about spiritual inspiration—they were about spiritual preparation.

You didn't climb to graduate. You climbed to be commissioned. Now it's time to ask the question: *What was all this for?*

It was for them.

The people still stuck in confusion.

Still wrestling with doubt.

Still searching for hope.

Still living without Jesus.

And you—yes, you—are now called to help them find the trail.

The Climb was Preparation for the Calling

You were made for more.

More than routine. More than wondering.

What if the life of purpose you long for is already wired within you?

Deep inside every follower of Jesus lies a unique blend of talents, passions, spiritual gifts, and a divine calling—placed there by God, waiting to be awakened.

God didn't save you to sit still. He saved you to walk in power. He saved you to serve.

He gifted you—personally, intentionally, uniquely.

And now, He's inviting you to discover those gifts and put them to work for the sake of His Kingdom.

*Each one should use whatever gift he has received to
serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its
various forms. —1 Peter 4:10*

Discover the Calling God Hardwired Into You

Your gifts matter. Your story matters. Your design is not a random

mix of talents, quirks, and experiences. It's a divine blueprint for a unique calling.

- You have been:
- Spiritually gifted
- Naturally talented
- Passionately burdened
- Personally shaped
- Kingdom commissioned

God wants to use all of it. So what do you do next? Start a new climb. Go through the next book in this journey:

Wired: Discover the Calling God Hardwired Into You
by Brian Carlson.

In *Wired*, you'll discover:

- The surprising difference between talents and spiritual gifts
- How to uncover your God-given calling
- Why your passions matter—and where they point you
- The often-misunderstood power of the baptism of the Holy Spirit
- How to activate the life you were created to live

This is more than a book. It's a guide to discovering who God made you to be—and stepping boldly into the Kingdom purpose He's prepared for you. And don't go alone. Invite your coach or mentor to walk through it with you. Ask them to help you process what you discover, pray through the insights, and take action on your next steps.

You're not here by accident. You're wired for something eternal.

It's time to find out what.

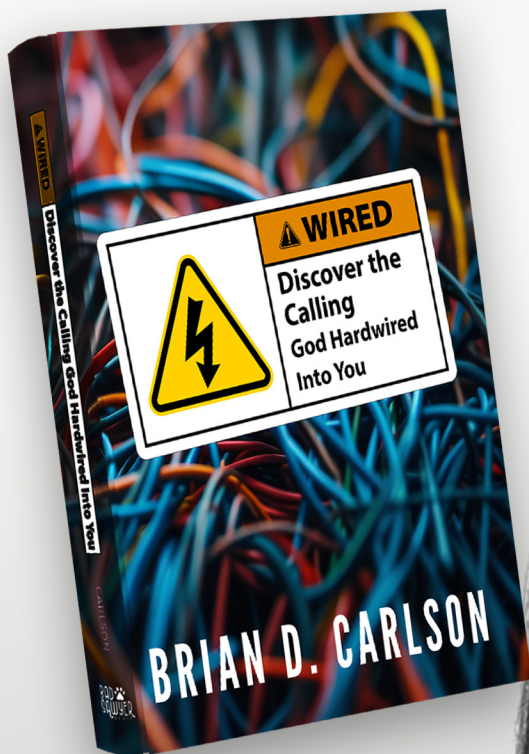
Now step into your purpose.

The Cause is still calling.

Climb on.

YOU WERE CREATED ON PURPOSE, FOR A PURPOSE

Unlock the unique mix of talents, passions, and spiritual gifts God placed in you. **WIRED** will help you discover your calling and live it out with purpose and power.



Available now on Amazon





ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Brian Carlson has served as a pastor for over 25 years, devoting his life to teaching God's Word, making disciples, and walking alongside others on their journey with Jesus. A faithful husband to his wife Beka and a proud father of four, Brian's life is rooted in faith, family, and a deep passion for helping people grow in Christ.

Originally from Oregon, Brian and Beka made their way to Colorado as quickly as they could—drawn by the beauty of the mountains, the sunshine, and the call to build a thriving, Christ-centered community. Today, Brian serves as the lead pastor of Church on the Hill in Montrose, Colorado—a vibrant church known for its verse-by-verse Bible teaching and deep commitment to discipleship.

Whether he's preaching on Sunday, coaching a young believer, or mentoring future leaders, Brian's greatest joy is seeing people truly follow Jesus—step by step, day by day. His heartbeat is to see the church rise up with clarity, conviction, and a commitment to the Great Commission.

When he's not discipling others or teaching God's Word, you'll likely find Brian cheering for the Colorado Rockies, off-roading in his Jeep through the backroads of the Rockies, or making memories with his family.

This book, *Basecamp: A 40-Day Journey to Real Discipleship*, is a reflection of Brian's lifelong mission: to equip everyday believers to live boldly, walk closely with Jesus, and multiply their faith in the lives of others.