

**HOLY** *Sexuality*

**PREPARE  
YOUR**

*Heart*

**NORTH  
CANTON  
CHAPEL**

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*Need a Bible? Feel free to take one from the seat back in the Sanctuary or stop by the Next Steps area in the lobby. You can also access a digital copy via the YouVersion app or at [www.bible.com](http://www.bible.com)*

***For additional resources & digital version visit:  
<https://www.ncchapel.com/holysexuality>***



*Our world is loud in our ears right now, isn't it? It seems that wherever we turn, everyone is shouting their opinions and fears about a whole litany of divisive and explosive topics.*

*Perhaps you feel angry and unsettled; maybe even though you know it will likely be fruitless, you find yourself entering into heated and damaging conversations, desperate to be heard, longing for truth to be upheld.*

*Perhaps you are weary, wounded, and tempted to shut down from not only other people who have hurt you, but also from God. Maybe you're struggling to even know how to pray or if God will hear.*

*Perhaps you feel afraid or hopeless. It feels like the world is coming apart at the seams everywhere you look, and you are wrestling with the temptation to despair.*

*Perhaps you're just tired of it all.*

*Starting the week of August 28, we are beginning a six-week teaching series called *Holy Sexuality*. We will be looking at God's design, our brokenness, and what the Bible has to say about our sexuality and what it means that Jesus brings redemption and calls us to holy living. We know these will be emotionally laden topics for all of us in different ways, and address issues that can be divisive or sensitive to navigate. Over the next four weeks, we want to create space for God to move in our hearts as we seek to be people filled with the peace of God, in a world that is anything but peaceful.*

*Each week has one passage to focus on and some suggestions for how to clear space in your heart and life to be ready to hear what God has for you.*



WEEK ONE // JULY 31 - AUG 6

***BE STILL***

WEEK TWO // AUG 7 - 13

***BEHOLD YOUR  
GOD***

WEEK THREE // AUG 14 - 20

***REMEMBER  
WHOSE YOU ARE***

WEEK FOUR // AUG 21 - 28

***TRUST HIM WITH  
THOSE YOU LOVE***



WEEK ONE //  
BE STILL

## Focus Passage //

### Psalm 46 //

Slowly read this psalm several times, aloud if possible

Before digging into any one verse, back up and take in the psalm as a whole. What seem to be the circumstances?

What would you say is the overall tone? What emotion(s) does it express?

Read or listen to the psalm in another translation to help you get a better feel for what he is saying. (ESV, CSB, NIV, NASB would be good options and available on the BibleGateway or YouVersion apps)

Go line by line and put this psalm into your own words. Think about what the psalmist is saying with the particular metaphors and word choices he used. Ask yourself, "How else could this be written? Why did he say it this way?"

Make a list of all of the things this psalm says about God's character and what He does.

We are probably most familiar with the first line of verse 10, often scrawled across the photo of an idyllic and peaceful setting. But this is anything but a peaceful setting in Psalm 46! There is trouble (vs. 1), and a lot of it. It feels as if the very earth will give way (vs. 2); the nations are raging and kingdoms are tottering (vs. 6)! It is in the midst of this less-than-serene setting that we are told to *be still and know that He is God*. In the midst of all of that upheaval, we are told to know, to fix our minds on, these truths about who God is and what He does.

# Be Still //

What in your life is causing you the most emotional turmoil and distraction? Consider how you might fast from things that are taking your eyes off of the Lord.

If social media is an issue for you, consider stepping away for the next few weeks altogether. If that is not an option, limit the time and attention you give to it by putting time limits on your devices, turning off notifications, or taking the apps off your phone.

If the news is creating turmoil and distraction, turn it off! Fast from watching the news altogether, turn off the constant flow of notifications, or limit your intake through something like the PourOver newsletter (emailed news summaries sent three times a week).



*Scan this QR code to  
subscribe to The  
PourOver*

# Know that He is God //

The *knowing* in this psalm is an active command, not a passive state - be still and know. Sure, we know that He is God, but do we *know* that He is God? Is that *knowing* being demonstrated in how we are responding to the upheaval around us? As you fast from things that distract you this week, work to actively focus your mind on truth.

Perhaps work to commit Psalm 46 or a portion of it to memory. Put it on your mirror, on your phone lock screen, or at your desk near your computer.

Turn on hymns and worship playlists and sing these truths into your heart and mind.

Practice the habit of short prayers through the day to take your thoughts captive. "Lord, when I saw/ heard \_\_\_\_\_, I began to feel \_\_\_\_\_. But I know that you are \_\_\_\_\_. Help me to *be still and know!*"



WEEK TWO //  
BEHOLD YOUR GOD

## Focus Passage //

### Isaiah 40:9-31 //

The first 39 chapters of the book of Isaiah contain some difficult prophecies about the coming judgment of God on the nation of Judah due to their continued hardness of heart, persistence in idolatry, and refusal to worship and follow the Lord. These chapters are full of dire warnings - Babylon will strike, the city will be destroyed, the people carried off into captivity. Even though there are threads of hope throughout, there was no question about what tomorrow would hold for them and their children - and it sounded pretty bleak.

Chapter 40 is a pivot point in this book, turning from coming judgment to future hope and comfort. Where could the people find hope in the midst of all of this bad news? Isaiah's answer rings through the chapter: *Behold your God*.

Read this passage multiple times. Consider listening to it in an audio Bible, reading it aloud, reading additional translations as you did last week.

What words, phrases, or ideas do you see repeated?

What imagery or metaphors does Isaiah use?  
What truths do these word pictures convey?

Isaiah is calling the people to behold their God. Like we looked at in Psalm 46, this is a call to *active knowing*, to turning their attention toward, considering deeply the greatness of their God! Make a list of who God is, what He does, and what He is superior to from this passage.

Over and over through the coming chapters, Isaiah will deliver this message - *fear not*. How could God warn the people of all of this impending judgment but then command them not to fear? Charles Spurgeon once said, "*The fear of God is the death of every other fear; like a mighty lion, it chases all other fears before it.*" The more they see God rightly - the more they behold Him - the less they will fear the future, the Babylonians, and the myriad things out of their control.

# Behold Your God //

*Fear not!* What are your biggest fears at this time? What do you find yourself worrying about in the middle of the night?

Meditate on the truths you listed about God - how can these truths put those fears into perspective? Ask the Lord to help you see Him rightly, to believe Him more fully. *Lord, I do believe. Help my unbelief!*

*To whom then will you liken God?* 40:18-21 vividly describes the futility of trusting in a created idol. Ask God to show you what *created things*, be it other people, government stability, financial security, etc, that you are clinging to for safety. Confess that to Him and ask Him for the grace to trust Him more!

*They who wait for the Lord will renew their strength* - Do you struggle to trust the Lord and wait on His timing, to rest in His control rather than trying to take control yourself? Ask the Lord to help you be at rest in these truths, and be a person who displays peace and trust in Him to a world in crisis.



WEEK THREE //  
REMEMBER WHOSE YOU ARE

## Focus Passage //

Matthew 10:24-31 &  
Matthew 6:25-34 //

In Matthew 10, Jesus is preparing the twelve to go out into the world and proclaim that the kingdom is at hand. It's not exactly an upbeat pep talk - He says He is sending them out as sheep in the midst of wolves (10:16), He tells them they will face persecution (10:17-18), and that they will be hated by all for His name (10:22). Cheery news, right? Like Isaiah 40, there is some bad news, but there is also really good news - and the good news is all about the trustworthy and faithful character of our loving God.

Read both passages multiple times. Consider listening to them in an audio Bible, reading aloud, or reading additional translations as you did last week.

Think through Jesus' ministry as recorded in the gospels (even consider opening up the book of Mark and flipping through, chapter by chapter). How does He treat people? What does He call them to? Who is He rejected by, and why?

Why does Jesus say His disciples should expect to be rejected? [10:24-25; Mark 3:22 records how the unbelieving scribes accused Jesus of being 'possessed by Beelzebul (Satan).']

Jesus has a lot to say about *fear* in the Matthew 10 passage. What are they to fear? What are they not to fear? Does this remind you of anything from Psalm 46 and Isaiah 40?

In Matthew 6, what reasons does He give them for not being anxious?

Read 10:29-31 again and then read Matthew 6:25-26. How do these images relate to God as the Shepherd in Isaiah 40?

Jesus doesn't reassure His followers that they won't suffer. Rather, He tells them they *will* suffer, be misunderstood, and rejected. After all, why would they expect to be treated better than Jesus Himself? But in the midst of that, He reassures them that they are *deeply known* and *valuable*. Much more valuable than the sparrows - and not even one of these little creatures will fall to the ground unseen by the Father.

# Remember //

*Have no fear of them* - Isaiah 40 and these passages in Matthew are full of descriptions of the natural world. Go on a hike this week, or just watch the birds at your birdfeeder, as you ponder and pray through these truths. Our God is both the mighty Creator who calls the stars out by name, and also sees every sparrow and the very hairs upon your head. Praise Him for His vast power and also His intimate love! If you are in Christ, there is no safer place than in His hand! "*Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.*" - *Isaiah 43:1*

*It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher* - Sometimes we have a tendency to be drawn to Jesus as the meek and mild Lamb and forget His high calls to holiness and repentance. Or, we flip that and are drawn to His wrath against sin but overlook the tender way He cares for those who are hurting and lost in sin and brokenness. Do you overemphasize one aspect of His character to the neglect of the other? Ask Him to continue to form you to be more like Him in both His tender love for the hurting and also love of truth.



WEEK FOUR //  
TRUST HIM WITH THOSE YOU LOVE

## Focus Passage //

### Ephesians 1:1 - 2:10 //

Sometimes it can feel much easier to trust the Lord with our own future and His work in our lives than to trust Him with those we deeply love. I can look back and see God's faithfulness in my life through good and bad, but *what will happen to my kids?* I know He is good today, *but what will happen twenty years from now?* Paul's letters can be helpful to us in this as we see how he thinks of and intercedes for those he loves, even when he knows that they are vulnerable in a corrupt culture and that they are facing (and will face) increasing persecution and spiritual attack.

Once again, read this passage multiple times. Consider listening to it in an audio Bible, reading it aloud, reading additional translations.

What is the tone of this passage? Is Paul worried? Confident? Full of praise?

Go through this passage and make a list of all that God has done and who He is.

Now go through the passage and consider who we were, and who we are because of Christ.

Make a list of specific things Paul prays for when he prays for the Ephesian believers.

At a time when Paul could be full of anxiety for them and writing dire warnings about the changing world, what do you think is the basis of his confidence for them? Look at Philippians 1:6 for another aspect of what formed his prayers for those he loved.

This month we have spent a lot of time considering the *greatness of God* and that *we do not need to fear*. These truths should also increasingly form the way we pray for and entrust our loved ones to the Lord's care. He is a Good Shepherd for me, *and* He is able to shepherd my children. He holds the nations in His hand, *and* I can rest in His sovereignty over the next legislation or court decision.

## **Entrust //**

Paul's letters are full of names - he often will conclude a letter with a long list of personal greetings (look at Romans 16, for example). If you do not already have this, write out a list of names - who are the people you are concerned about, love, feel responsible for?

Trusting the Lord with those we love doesn't mean we remove ourselves from responsibility for them, but that we feel our limitations and know that ultimately God is the One who can redeem, restore, make them strong, and protect them. We are called and commanded to intercede on behalf of these loved ones, praying for God to do what we are unable to do. Based on this pattern in Ephesians 1-2, what are specific ways you can pray for those on your list?

In his book [A Praying Life](#), Paul Miller explains his system of praying for those in his life with index cards. He puts one name at the top of each index card, and adds specific dated prayer requests for that person - perhaps he is praying for their salvation, or for them to find their identity in Jesus and not in others. He might be asking the Lord for physical healing for them, new employment, or increased trust through a difficult trial. Consider beginning a habit like this as a practical act of obedience to entrust those you love to God's care. Instead of worrying or nagging, write down your concerns and bring it to the Father on a regular basis. He loves you. He loves them. He knows every hair of your child's head. He is safe to trust.



The goal of Six Steps to Journey Well is to help your church or team to learn practical, gospel-centered ways to walk alongside LGBT+ friends and loved ones. Presented by Matt & Laurie Krieg.

**Sunday, September 11 from 2:00pm - 4:00pm**

Learn more & register at  
[www.ncchapel.com/journeywell](http://www.ncchapel.com/journeywell)



The Center for Faith, Sexuality & Gender presents "Grace/Truth" (1.0 and 2.0), a ten-week small group learning experience that introduces Christians to LGBT + people. Throughout the experience viewers will learn the language to use and avoid, better understand the theologically faithful view of marriage and sexuality, and receive practical guidance on how to embody the love of Christ toward sexual and gender minorities.

**Sundays beginning October 9**

Sunday Mornings at 10:30am (in-person only)

Sunday Evenings at 6:00pm (in-person & online option)

Learn more & register at  
[www.ncchapel.com/gracetruth](http://www.ncchapel.com/gracetruth)

PARENTING  
**LGBTQ**  
kids

Tuesday Evenings | 7pm - 8:30pm  
October 2 - Dec 13  
[ncchapel.com/parentings](http://ncchapel.com/parentings)

*Love your kids like Jesus. This 11-part series helps Christian parents navigate the journey of raising and walking alongside their LGBTQ child.*

THE CENTER FOR  
FAITH, SEXUALITY & GENDER

**HOLY** *Security*



Love your kids like Jesus. This 11-part series helps Christian parents navigate the journey of raising and walking alongside their LGBTQ child.

***Tuesday evenings beginning Oct 4 at 7:00pm***

Learn more & register at  
[www.ncchapel.com/parentings](http://www.ncchapel.com/parentings)

**MARRIAGE**  
*Weekend*

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29**  
**8AM - 1PM / \$25**

[NCCHAPEL.COM/MARRIAGE](http://NCCHAPEL.COM/MARRIAGE)



Join us for a morning marriage refresh, designed to give you an opportunity to pause and focus on how to strengthen and enjoy your marriage. Utilizing effective counseling tools from Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott, we will look at the unique dynamics at work in your relationship and help you see and appreciate your spouse in new ways. Our goal isn't just longevity in marriage, or even happy marriages, but holy marriages marked by the supernatural presence and transformative love of Jesus Christ.

***Saturday, October 29 from 8:00am - 1:00pm***  
\$25 per couple, lunch included.

Learn more & register at  
[www.ncchapel.com/marriage](http://www.ncchapel.com/marriage)

