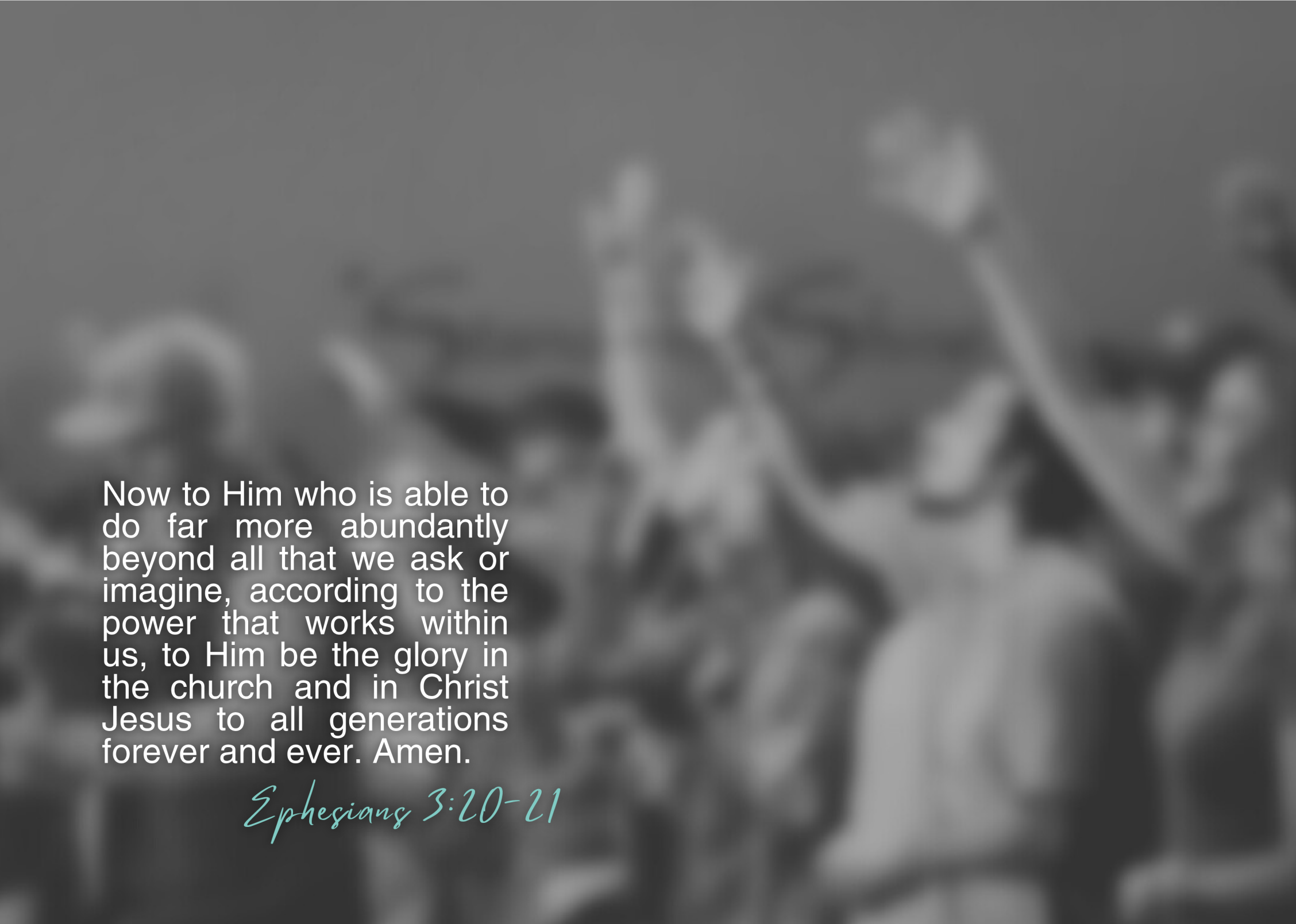


Abundantly **BEYOND**

This book belongs to

 Guide



Now to Him who is able to
do far more abundantly
beyond all that we ask or
imagine, according to the
power that works within
us, to Him be the glory in
the church and in Christ
Jesus to all generations
forever and ever. Amen.

Ephesians 3:20-21

NOW TO
HIM WHO
IS ABLE
TO DO
FAR MORE
ABUNDANTLY



ALL THAT
WE ASK OR
IMAGINE...

EPHESIANS 3:20a



Beyond is The River Church's journey with Christ as he calls us to live and give beyond ourselves. This journey includes a message series, a group experience, and a daily devotional. **No matter where we are in our walk with Christ, He's always inviting and inspiring each of us to take our next step and do our part in reaching people for Jesus** in "Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8) Together, we'll grow in our relationship with God and build our faith as we look beyond to the place where He's calling us to go.



beyond

WHERE WE ARE
TO WHERE GOD
IS TAKING US.

spiritual journey

I want to start by saying thank you for going on this journey with us called **Beyond**. From the beginning of The River Church, we've taken many spiritual journeys together. We have grown together spiritually through the reading of God's Word, through worship and following God in obedience. When we do this all together, we call them "spiritual campaigns." It's something our whole church does together, from the adults to our students and children. We do this so that everyone grows in the same spiritual direction.

Our **Beyond** series is such an important step for us as a church. My prayer is that it would not just be a step for our church, but it would be a personal step for you in your own walk with God.

The **Beyond** series includes three vital parts, that I want to invite you to participate in. First, there is the **Weekend Message Series**. Please come each week during this series. Second, join a **Life Group**.

Going on the journey with others is so important to your growth. And finally, use this **Guide**. What you're holding in your hand is your key to the entire **Beyond** journey. In the guide you'll find places each week to take notes during the weekend messages. You'll also find your Group discussion questions. And you'll find the **Daily Devotional** we'll read together over these weeks. The devotional takes place five days a week, Monday-Friday. Spend a few minutes each day reading and reflecting on the questions. There is a place where you can write down what God is saying to you every day. This is your personal workbook with God.

Thank you again for committing to go on this journey with us. I'm praying that you would encounter God in a new and amazing way.



Pastor Matthew Trexler



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How to Use This Guide

The Beyond Guide has everything you need to go on the journey.

Weekly Message Notes

Each week begins with blank pages to take notes during the weekend messages. Use this space to jot down anything God speaks to you during the message series.

Group Questions

Next, you'll find the key thought, key verse, and discussion questions you'll use at your Life Group during the week. Be sure to bring your Guide with you to your Life Group.

Daily Devotional

Finally, you'll find the devotional readings that we will all read individually as a church family over the next five weeks. The devotional takes place five days a week, Monday through Friday. Spend a few minutes reflecting on the questions at the end of each day. There is a place where you can write down anything God is saying to you.

Stories of God's Movement

Throughout our guide, you'll find stories of from people who have experienced the abundance of Jesus Christ at The River Church. These stories are a reminder of God's work through us to help people Know God, Find Freedom, Discover Purpose, and Make a Difference. Let's worship and honor God for all he is continuing to do in and through The River Church!

We hope these stories inspire you to join us on our journey to follow God where he's leading.

Share Your Story!

Be sure to let us know what God speaks to you during our **Beyond** series.

Share your thoughts and stories at my.theriver.cc/share

Welcome Home

The River started as a church with a clear goal: help people to know God, find freedom in Christ, discover the purpose God has for their lives, and to make an eternal difference in the lives of others.

We believe that the local church *mobilized* is the hope of the world. Therefore we designed The River Church to be rooted in our community. We are a home for everyone, welcoming wide ranges of different personalities, cultures, races, talents, ability levels and perspectives so that the beauty of God's diversity can shine. We desire to love people so much as to eliminate the devaluing of others' lives; we want to follow Jesus in his example to honor and love the "least of these" (Matt. 25:40).

Our vision is to share the gospel in our local community, in our region, in our country, and throughout the world, just as Jesus commanded in Acts 1:8.

In 2025, we witnessed God at work in a miraculous way:



600+

Individuals have made first time commitments to Jesus Christ.



200+

People have taken their next step in baptism.



130

People took next steps in the Growth Track at Discovery 101.



750+

Kids & students gathering weekly.

The River South Campus

It's been an exciting 7 months since we brought together two incredible congregations. Our attendance is up by nearly 900! That means we are at capacity... but there are still people who need to know Jesus. They need us to open up our home. Saying "we're full" is not an option. The solution? We must revitalize the south campus so we can reach the 42,000 in Grant County who self identified as having no religious affiliation.

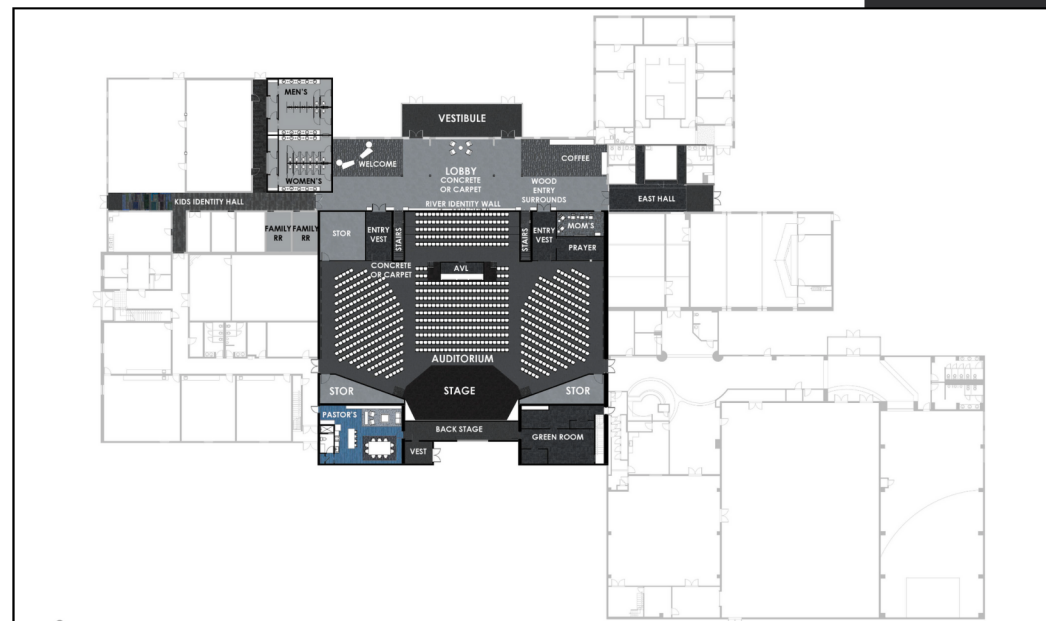
To continue caring for every person in our community, our physical footprint needs to expand and evolve — more space for our families, a worship center we can grow into, and intentionally crafted areas to care for the "least of us" as Christ calls us to.

Beyond begins in 2026 with the goals of raising \$6M to fund Phase 1 of the project. Phase 1 of this construction project will begin in early 2026 and conclude in fall of 2026, by which time we expect to be worshipping at the newly revitalized South Campus.

- ***Revitalized Worship Center - 1,050 seats***
- ***Dedicated Children's Building***
- ***Expanded restrooms, including family & special needs equipped***
- ***Dedicated River Access spaces, kids and adult special needs***

TOTAL PROJECT COST: **\$6M** (approx.)

CONSTRUCTION: **9-12 months** (approx.)



Dedicated Children's Building



At The River Church, we believe in the next generation so much that we refer to them as the “NOW Generation.” We will continue to invest in those coming behind us. They are not the leaders of tomorrow, but the leaders of today. In order to continue reaching and developing the Now Generation, Phase 1 of the revitalization project will include renovating the old pre-school building and connecting it with the main building. This will greatly increase our ability to welcome families to our home.

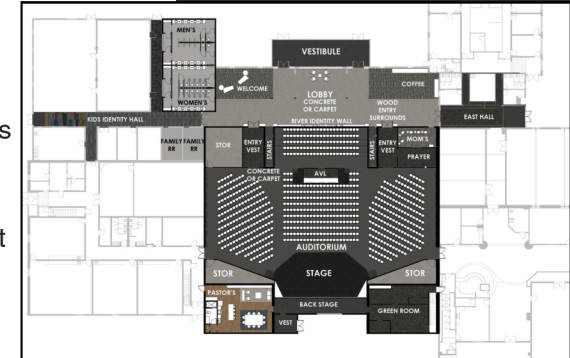
PROJECT DETAILS:

- Completely revitalize classroom spaces
- Create family walkway
- Develop fully equipped special needs rooms
- Will increase square footage from 22,000 sq ft currently serving birth - 8th grade, to 30,000 for birth -3rd grade



Revitalized Worship Center

When this building was originally constructed, Pastor Cockrell had a God-given vision of this building being a regional church. That dream is now being realized. The revitalized worship center will seat 1,050 adults. The current adult capacity at the north campus is 550 adults.



PROJECT DETAILS:

- 1,050 total seats
- Prayer room and mother's room within the worship space
- Redesigned stage and lighting



Welcome Center & Restrooms



The River Church is a growing population of all ages, all stages of life and ability levels. Our building needs to reflect this reality; it must function in a way that meets our practical needs as a church family. Expanded restrooms and an updated entrance will demonstrate our heart of hospitality for individuals, families, and welcome everyone who comes.

PROJECT DETAILS:

- Updated entrance & welcome area
- Expanded men's, women's and family restrooms



Family & Special Needs Spaces



Our church family honors and welcomes individuals and families with unique needs. The River Church includes children and adults with special needs and the worship experience will be fully accessible to them!

PROJECT DETAILS:

- River Kids wing for River Access includes classrooms for two age groups, a sensory room and restroom
- Dedicated Adult Special Needs room for worship gatherings
- Special needs restrooms in both buildings

The Invitation to a Journey

The Beyond campaign is a journey designed to impact our region for Christ. This is a God-sized task, but we serve a big God. He is generous and able to do more with the loaves and fish we bring than we could imagine. Reaching our need of \$6 million will take deep surrender and time - this project will take several years to complete. However, we challenge you to be prayerfully and financially involved in the vision of the Beyond campaign.

You have the opportunity to make a pledge, to commit above your regular tithes.

Commitment cards will be made available for you. To help you calculate your pledge amount, you can use the worksheet on the next page.

If you feel fearful, pray and ask God to help overcome your fear. As you begin to pray about how much God might want you to invest in this vision, we encourage you to embrace this as a spiritual journey with God. We believe that God has blessed us to be a blessing to others, and believe Jesus' promise that he came for us to have life "to the full." So let us surrender this journey and all our possessions to Christ and seek his full life.

THIS WORKSHEET SHOWS THE IMPACT YOUR GIFT CAN HAVE OVER 3 YEARS

TOTAL AMOUNT	ANNUAL	MONTHLY	WEEKLY
\$1,000,000	\$333,333	\$27,778	\$6,410
\$750,000	\$250,000	\$20,833	\$4,808
\$500,000	\$166,667	\$13,889	\$3,205
\$250,000	\$83,333	\$6,944	\$1,603
\$100,000	\$33,333	\$2,778	\$641
\$75,000	\$25,000	\$2,083	\$481
\$50,000	\$16,667	\$1,389	\$321
\$25,000	\$8,333	\$694	\$160
\$10,000	\$3,333	\$278	\$64
\$5,000	\$1,667	\$139	\$32
\$2,500	\$833	\$69	\$16
\$1,000	\$333	\$28	\$6

**MAKING ROOM FOR
THE 42,000 IN OUR
REGION WHO DON'T
YET KNOW GOD**

Key Dates & Events

JANUARY 15 & 18

**BEYOND SERIES INTRODUCTION
+ LIFE GROUPS KICK-OFF**

JANUARY 22 & 25

BEYOND SERIES WEEK 1

JAN 29 & FEB 1

BEYOND SERIES WEEK 2

FEBRUARY 5 & 8

BEYOND SERIES WEEK 3

FEBRUARY 12 & 15

**BEYOND SERIES WEEK 4
COMMITMENT WEEKEND**

FEBRUARY 19 & 22

**BEYOND SERIES WEEK 5
MIRACLE OFFERING**

Campaign Goals

- Everyone on the journey
- 125+ Life Groups
- Total 3-year faith commitments of \$6M
- Miracle Offering

Treniti & Savannah



Treniti

Jesus began rewriting our story while I was finishing high school. We had always known about God, since our grandmother adopted the Christian tradition and started sprinkling it into our lives from an early age, but we did not know God. There's a big difference between those two things. As we were growing up, we did not live in a household that held to Christian traditions much less had a genuine love for God.

Something began to peak my interest in high school, I can't put my finger on what. I started going to FCA and visiting church more often, but I still wasn't making it a priority. When I left for college, I wasn't committed. I still wanted what the world had to offer me. Then, at Passion 2024, Jesus truly changed the desires of my heart; I decided that I was not going to leave and go right back to living in the world. The world had only ever brought me heartache!

I began attending church regularly, I dug into the word, I found joy in prayer. When I moved back to Marion, I started attending The River, got baptized, and immediately jumped into serving - I said 'yes' to every opportunity I had! What I never expected was Forge, the young adults groups.

During college, the young adults group became the answer to a prayer that I didn't even know I needed to pray! The mentors, friends, and leaders I've been able to

connect with have dramatically changed my life. They have blessed me beyond what I could ever imagine, caring for me in ways that go above and beyond - helping with car problems, financial struggles, challenges with sin, and have even given me a place to call home for a short while. The other young adults and these mentors have become family for life, reflecting the family that all believers are adopted into: God's family.

More than anything else, I am learning to accept that I am unable to save others. Only God can do that. The family that I hope to see saved, the friends, etc., it's all down to him! We don't carry the burden of saving others; Christ has already accomplished salvation! It's only about who will receive it, and that is not something I can control. Instead, we trust in God's victory, that he promises new life, and that he is helping us break and heal generational curses that have been upon our family.

Savanah

Once I started seeing my sister Treniti go "all-in" for God, I was really interested. Her faith seemed so inspiring. . Though, I was reluctant to give up all my free Sundays and wake up early to go to church... But we jumped in together and attended 21 Days of Prayer. It was great, and so

different from anything else I had experienced. I still didn't know a lot about God, but I started attending church with Treniti and then started going to High School Nights for River Church students and it all began to 'click.' I began to feel the presence of God, witnessing people being anointed, seeing the community of high schoolers come together in prayer...

One night I felt the Lord really calling to me, telling me that he wanted to use me, and I wanted to live for him. I told a leader that night that I wanted to be all-in and get baptized. The very next month, I was!

God has been growing a desire for his Word and his joy in my heart since then. I crave time in the Word! I suddenly had the courage to serve in new ways. I would never have imagined enjoying leading the dance-worship for VBS, but once I stepped into it, I was overjoyed just to see joy filled kids as we sang and danced. Both of us have been learning what it looks like to live this new life, this better life that God has for us.

Treniti & Savanah

The life that you receive from God, the new desires, the new way of being in the world but not of it, it's something you can't explain to someone else. It's something that you have to experience. Others see the fruit that your life brings, but have a hard time understanding where it's coming from. Sometimes, what is producing greater healing and fruit in your life is the exact thing that will be mocked and

ridiculed by the people you know. That has been our experience. Our family is full of brokenness, generations of poor choices leading to more poor choices, resulting in deep wounds and divisions. We both agree that there is a great "darkness" over our family. For two young individuals who still rely on our family, this comes with a whole host of issues. The more dedicated we became to living differently through Jesus, the more push-back from our family we received. It is an everyday struggle we encounter, and part of our deepest heartache.

We have truly seen God pour out his joy and love through the community at The River. God keeps revealing more about how he designed us and what purposes he has for us as we continue to serve with the church. We are working to fill our ears and our "downtime" with meaningful and edifying content, like listening to sermons or worshiping, rather than scrolling on social media or playing a random movie. We're both being more conscientious about who we spend our time with.

Our story is one that walks directly through The River Church's vision. We came to know God. We found freedom in Christ. We discovered new purposes for our lives, and we continue to discover new callings and new purposes every day. We know that no matter the darkness we face in our lives, even in our family, God has done a new and good work in us, and he will continue to do so!

Week One

LIVING GOD'S WAY

BEYOND

[illegible][illegible]

group guide

KEY VERSE

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. 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.

ROMANS 12:1-2, NIV

KEY THOUGHT

Living God's way is a life of deep surrender.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *When is the last time you did something crazy for God? What was it?*
2. *If you've never stepped out and done something crazy for God, why is that?*
3. *According to Romans 12:1, how is surrender tied to worship?*
4. *According to Romans 12:2, how is surrender tied to understanding God's will?*
5. *Does living God's way always require deep surrender? Explain.*
6. *Is surrendering everything to God difficult or easy? Does it make life difficult or easy?*
7. *When God asks you to surrender, He always has your best interest in mind. How does that help you trust Him more?*
8. *Have you ever had a deep "surrender" moment with God? Tell us about it.*

APPLICATION QUESTION

Is there a specific area of your life God may be asking you to surrender? What is it?

monday

SURRENDER

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.

ROMANS 12:1 (NIV)

Everything with God begins with surrender. Simply put, if you want to live God's way, then you have to embrace a life of deep surrender. All throughout the Bible you can find a common theme: The people who lived lives of great purpose and meaning were the ones who chose the life of surrender. They never outgrew that lifestyle.

"Surrender" isn't a very exciting word. It feels more like a symbol for defeat. Raising the white flag. Giving up. And most of the time we only surrender when we're forced to. But the interesting thing about God is that He never forces us to surrender. He simply asks. Our response is to yield our lives, willingly, to Him.

Think back on your life for a moment. Have you truly surrendered yourself to Jesus? Not just parts of your life, or certain aspects of it. But all of you, surrendered to God. Have you given Him full control? Make no mistake, the journey you're about to go on is a journey of deep surrender. You can begin that journey right now by saying this simple prayer in your heart:

God, whatever You want, I'll do it. Whatever You say, I'll listen. I completely surrender myself to You today and ask You to reveal Yourself to me. Amen.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME?

HOW CAN I APPLY IT?

TALK TO GOD ABOUT IT.

WHAT'S GOD DOING IN YOUR LIFE THROUGH BEYOND?
SHARE YOUR STORY WITH US AT: MY.THERIVER.CC/SHARE

Tuesday

RISK IT ALL

Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation."

GENESIS 12:1-2A, NASB

Abraham's story paints an incredible picture of how to live a life of surrender. In Genesis 12, God tells Abraham to pack up everything and move hundreds of miles away. Notice God says, "to the land I will show you." This means Abraham didn't know where he was headed when he left.

Now at this point in his life, Abraham was 75. That's retirement age, not adventure age! What's more, Abraham was successful. He was wealthy and had built a nice life for himself. He had servants, livestock, and extended family. Abraham had to be willing to risk it all to follow God to a land he didn't even know. With no guarantee of safety or success, all Abraham had was God's word.

Just like Abraham, you've probably worked hard to carve out a nice life for yourself and your family. To have your needs met. To be a success. What if God interrupted your plans and asked you to risk it all—to go on a journey you don't even know where it will take you? Could you do it? Would you go? The amazing thing about God is that when we surrender ourselves to Him, we always end up gaining more in the end.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME?

HOW CAN I APPLY IT?

TALK TO GOD ABOUT IT.

WHAT'S GOD DOING IN YOUR LIFE THROUGH BEYOND?
SHARE YOUR STORY WITH US AT: [MY.THERIVER.CC/SHARE](https://my.river.cc/share)

wednesday

RE-SURRENDER

Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love— Isaac— and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you."

GENESIS 22:1-2, NIV

At this point, Abraham has been living on the edge of faith for 25 years. He's well into retirement age when God calls him into his greatest test of faith.

Can you imagine what Abraham must have been feeling as he walked Isaac up that mountain? Can you imagine the turmoil? This was his son, his future, his legacy. This was everything he had sold out for. This was all the years of following God faithfully, and now in an instant God was asking Abraham to lay it all down, to re-surrender, and start all over.

Here's what we learn from this story: Living God's way isn't a moment, it's a lifestyle of deep trust and deep surrender. The idea that we can push hard for God for a little bit and then mentally check out and coast—that's not biblical. The mentality of working hard for a while and then retiring to the islands, sipping fruity drinks, and lying on the beach all day long—that's more of the American Dream, not God's Dream for your life.

We never graduate from surrendering to God. He always calls us to greater levels of commitment and trust. What could He be calling you to?

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME?

HOW CAN I APPLY IT?

TALK TO GOD ABOUT IT.

WHAT'S GOD DOING IN YOUR LIFE THROUGH BEYOND?
SHARE YOUR STORY WITH US AT: MY.THERIVER.CC/SHARE

Thursday

THE BLESSING OF SURRENDER

This is what the Lord says: Because you have obeyed me and have not withheld even your son, your only son, I swear by my own name that I will certainly bless you. I will multiply your descendants beyond number.

GENESIS 22:16-17A, NLT

When Abraham surrendered Isaac, God provided a ram to take his place. Not only did God give Isaac back, but He also pronounced an incredible blessing over Abraham's life. Notice what God says in these verses, "Because you have not withheld your son... I will surely bless you."

There's a principle here: God does not ask us to surrender something simply to test us, but to bless us. If Abraham had withheld Isaac from God, he would have kept his son but forfeited the blessing. But by freely surrendering to God what was dearest to him, Abraham received Isaac plus the blessing. You see, God can't bless what we hold onto with tight fists. But when we freely give, then our hands are open to freely receive from God.

Is there something God may be asking you to surrender? Take comfort in knowing that when you obey God and lay it down, you will find a life, a joy, and a peace so much greater than you could imagine. And it will position you to receive God's greater blessing in return. Only the life of surrender brings the blessing of surrender.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME?

HOW CAN I APPLY IT?

TALK TO GOD ABOUT IT.

WHAT'S GOD DOING IN YOUR LIFE THROUGH BEYOND?
SHARE YOUR STORY WITH US AT: MY.THERIVER.CC/SHARE

friday

THE NEXT LEVEL

Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.

PSALM 20:7, NIV

In order for us to live God's way, we have to trust Him. We have to believe that He is for us and that He's not going to hurt us or take advantage of us. But learning to trust God is a process. Here's what that process looks like:

First, God calls you to do something. No matter where you're at, God will call you to join Him at some new level, some new challenge. But that means sacrifice and surrender. So next, you'll wrestle with God. "God, was that really You or just the pizza? God, that's crazy! How could You ask me to do that? What will people say?" But what comes next changes everything—you hear God speak. You receive revelation. Maybe it's in a prayer time, or maybe it's through someone else. But it fills you with vision and passion. Then finally, you come back to God, openhanded, and you re-surrender.

You never outgrow this process of trust. Spiritual maturity isn't skipping a step, it's moving through the steps faster. Remember, whenever you reach re-surrender moments with God, they are actually invitations to join Him at the next level. As you embark on this Beyond journey, think about where God is trying to take you with Him. Are you ready to go to the next level?

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME?

HOW CAN I APPLY IT?

TALK TO GOD ABOUT IT.

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SHARE YOUR STORY WITH US AT: [MY.THERIVER.CC/SHARE](https://my.river.cc/share)

Kadisia's Story



Growing up, my mom encouraged me to pray and to trust in God; she encouraged me to attend church. Yet, I didn't know God the way I know him now. Then, in 4th grade, a friend invited me to Lakeview. They picked us up on a bus and it was so immediately good that my life started to revolve around the church from then on out! I found a family of believers I could rely on. My mom struggled with alcoholism. She was in and out of jail multiple times, so the church community taking care of me and my sisters gave us a sense of family different from anything we'd experienced. They helped raise us.

Though I continued in my faith, there was definitely a lot of maturing that God still wanted to do in me. I got married and had two awesome kids, but a year ago, I went through an unwanted divorce while I was pregnant with my second child. Trusting in God through that separation was difficult. Being raised in an unstable home meant that I learned self-sufficiency early on. I still try to be self-sufficient... I often want to run ahead and save everything on my own. God doesn't want us to have it all figured out, though. Often, what I think is good isn't God's idea of good. He's not so worried about the material things - he'll take care of that! - he's more concerned about my character. My character is supposed to look like his. One of the biggest ways he continues to grow my character is by bringing me freedom from the need for control. He doesn't tell me everything all at once. He doesn't offer me all the answers to my questions or show me the whole path ahead of me. He knows that if I had all the information, I'd try to take things on myself. He protects me from trying to take the reins, from trying to come in and force things to be the way I think they ought to be. The only thing he makes sure I know is that I'm taken care of. He keeps showing me all that he has in his storehouses, all the ways he is sufficient! It's more than I expected, and so much more than I deserve.

The most important truth I've learned throughout this season is that God is the perfect groom; he continues to provide the way a husband would. God has provided for us financially, he's soothed my newborn on nights when I was desperate for rest, he's never abandoned me - regardless of how difficult I've been to love - and he keeps giving all that we need plus a little extra! God gives me the tough love I need too. He's never enabled me to sink into self-pity, and he has convicted me about the things which I chose to say and do that contributed to the divorce. Our words truly do bring life or death.

There were times I spoke words that led to "death" over my family and my husband. God woke me up to see that some of what I spoke bore fruit, but not the good kind. With God's grace, I'm learning how to be obedient to Jesus in everything, including when to speak and when to keep my mouth shut. The more I lean on God, the more I am able to love my kids. I can see them growing because of what he's doing through me - it's not me, but God raising them to be mighty men through me! Even my 3 year old son recently accepted Jesus and I got to lead him through that conversation! I am learning to trust that he is working all things for good. My accomplishments, my mistakes - everything is something he can take and use for good.



"THE MORE I LEAN ON GOD, THE MORE I AM ABLE TO LOVE MY KIDS. I CAN SEE THEM GROWING BECAUSE OF WHAT HE'S DOING THROUGH ME - IT'S NOT ME, BUT GOD RAISING THEM TO BE MIGHTY MEN THROUGH ME!"

Week Two

HEARING GOD'S VOICE

BEYOND

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.[illegible]

group guide

KEY VERSE

My sheep hear my voice; I know them and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

JOHN 10:27-28, ESV

KEY THOUGHT

God is constantly speaking, and the way we show we hear Him is through obedience.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Do you believe God wants to speak to you? Why is that important?*
2. *Do you ever struggle with hearing God's voice? Why do you think that is?*
3. *How can you know for sure when God is speaking to you?*
4. *God speaks to us in multiple ways. Sometimes He speaks through His Word, through our relationships, and sometimes to us directly through the Holy Spirit. Tell us about a time God clearly spoke to you through one of these ways.*
5. *Which is more difficult: hearing God's voice or obeying what He says? Explain.*
6. *To hear God speak, we must first predetermine to obey what He says. Why is this important?*
7. *Why do we need to hear from God as we go on this Beyond journey together?*
8. *Tell us about a time you stepped out to obey God. What was the result?*

APPLICATION QUESTION

Is there something you need to hear from God about right now? What is it?

monday

HEARING GOD

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

JOHN 10:27-28, NASB

God wants to speak to you. Have you ever thought about that? Hearing God isn't a privilege reserved just for pastors, religious leaders, or "spiritual people". The Bible teaches us that God speaks to every Christian. So if you're a Christ-follower, that includes you.

In John 10:27-28, Jesus assures us that He speaks to every one of His followers. That means every Christian has the ability to hear God's voice. If someone says, "God never talks to me," it just means they probably don't know how to hear God speak. If that's you, if you've never heard God's voice before, that can change. It all begins with a real relationship with God. Stop for a moment and say this prayer out loud right now:

Jesus, I want to know You. I want to follow You. I want to hear Your voice. Please reveal Yourself to me more. Amen.

A simple prayer like that is a great place to start cultivating your relationship with God. You see, this Beyond journey isn't simply about our finances. At the end of the day, it's about loving God more, hearing His voice, and following Him. God wants to speak to you. Are you ready to hear?

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME?

HOW CAN I APPLY IT?

TALK TO GOD ABOUT IT.

WHAT'S GOD DOING IN YOUR LIFE THROUGH BEYOND?
SHARE YOUR STORY WITH US AT: [MY.THERIVER.CC/SHARE](https://my.river.cc/share)

Tuesday

GOD SPEAKS

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.
 GENESIS 1:3, ESV

God wants to speak to us. But sometimes we have trouble hearing His voice because we don't really believe He will speak to us. Whether it's a belief that God doesn't speak to anyone today, or a belief that God wouldn't speak to you personally, these beliefs form a barrier that can keep us from hearing from God.

Both mindsets are wrong. For at its foundation, Christianity isn't a religion, it's a relationship. The basis of any relationship is communication. Do you want to know the good news? God is a communicator! Over and over in the Bible you will find this phrase, "And God said..." From Genesis 1 all the way through Revelation 22, God speaks. And He still speaks to us today.

In order to hear God's voice, we must believe and embrace the fact that God loves to talk to us. He loves to make His will known to us. Time and again, God is the one who initiates conversations with us. We just have to be willing to listen. Do you believe God wants to speak to you? Do you believe He wants to communicate with you? Whether you've experienced God's voice many times in your life or have never heard Him, the truth is that He speaks. And He wants to speak to you today.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME?HOW CAN I APPLY IT?TALK TO GOD ABOUT IT.

WHAT'S GOD DOING IN YOUR LIFE THROUGH BEYOND?
 SHARE YOUR STORY WITH US AT: MY.THERIVER.CC/SHARE

wednesday

HOW GOD SPEAKS

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.

2 TIMOTHY 3:16, NIV

If you want to hear God's voice, here are three ways God speaks to us today.

First, God speaks through Scripture. God will never speak something personally to you that contradicts what He's already said in His Word. The great thing about the Bible is that you never have to wonder if it's God or not. It's all God-breathed. But you still have to know what His Word says in order to learn how to hear Him speak.

Second, God speaks through the Holy Spirit. One of the Holy Spirit's jobs is to speak to you. His voice could be described as an inner witness that you sense, an impression or a strong recurring thought, a deep calming peace, a genuine excitement, or an inner warning or check in your spirit.

Finally, God speaks through the Church. That's right, God will use the collective wisdom and counsel of the body of Christ to help you discern His voice. Sometimes it can be difficult to know when God is telling you something. This is where His people can help. God wants you to process your thoughts with other believers. And He can speak so strongly to you through these conversations. He can give you wisdom and direction.

The more time you spend in God's Word, with God's people, and listening to His Spirit, the more you will know His voice.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME?

HOW CAN I APPLY IT?

TALK TO GOD ABOUT IT.

WHAT'S GOD DOING IN YOUR LIFE THROUGH BEYOND?
SHARE YOUR STORY WITH US AT: MY.THERIVER.CC/SHARE

Thursday

THE ROLE OF OBEDIENCE

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.
JAMES 1:22, NIV

Have you ever tried giving advice to someone who didn't want to listen? Maybe it was a child or a friend, a co-worker or a boss... or a spouse— but we'll let that one go! It's not that they couldn't physically hear you, but you knew they wouldn't listen to what you had to say. When you know someone won't listen, does it make you want to talk with them?

In a similar way, why would God speak to us if He knows we won't listen? You'll hear God a lot clearer when you predetermine to listen and obey what He says. Think of it like tuning in to your favorite radio station. You have to tune in to the right frequency in order to hear. What's God's frequency? It's deep surrender.

When you fully surrender to God, it places you in a position to hear His voice more clearly. That's why we started week one of our journey with surrender. We don't surrender simply because God is good. We surrender because He's God. What He says is absolute for our lives. So right now, determine in your heart that when God speaks to you during this Beyond journey, no matter what He says, you will obey. And you'll be amazed at how much clearer His voice will be.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME?

HOW CAN I APPLY IT?

TALK TO GOD ABOUT IT.

WHAT'S GOD DOING IN YOUR LIFE THROUGH BEYOND?
SHARE YOUR STORY WITH US AT: MY.THERIVER.CC/SHARE

friday

OBEYING GOD'S VOICE

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

JOSHUA 1:9, NIV

Any time God calls you to take a step of obedience, it's scary at first. But if you fight through the fear and follow God, you'll see the miraculous take place. When you obey God, here's what you gain:

1. You gain God's presence. In John 14:21, Jesus ties love and obedience together. He says, *"He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me, and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him"* (NASB). You don't obey Jesus out of duty or obligation. You obey because you love Him. And His promise is that He will be with you.
2. You gain generational impact. When you obey God, the people closest to you will see. Psalm 103:17-18 (NLT) says, *"But the love of the Lord remains forever with those who fear him. His salvation extends to the children's children of those who are faithful to his covenant, of those who obey his commandments!"*
3. You gain courage. Courage isn't the absence of fear. Courage is doing what God has called you to do in spite of fear. Each time you take a step of faith and fight through fear, God proves Himself faithful, and your courage will grow.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME?**HOW CAN I APPLY IT?****TALK TO GOD ABOUT IT.**

WHAT'S GOD DOING IN YOUR LIFE THROUGH BEYOND?
SHARE YOUR STORY WITH US AT: MY.THERIVER.CC/SHARE

Mark & Brandie



Mark

Our story really begins with our kids. While I was struggling with an addiction to pain medication, our son, Austin, had the courage to bring me a Bible, to challenge me to seek freedom in Jesus. This moment got the wheels turning in my head.

Then the rest of our kids started getting into their faith. It's just like the SEEDs series we went through: our kids planted seeds in us and in one another. They would ask when we were going to church; they put pressure on us! Finally, a year ago, we started coming to The River Church regularly.

From the very first visit, I felt like Pastor Matthew was speaking directly to me through his sermons. It's felt that way every single week. I was astounded at the change that came over us. It was like a switch had been flipped inside me. My personality, my interests, and my approach to the world changed dramatically. In the past, I have been standoffish, inconsiderate, and short-tempered. Brandie can remember how I used to get during the Colts games! I would totally lose my cool... but I'm not that guy anymore.

My desires now are to serve others, to be open and vulnerable with them, and to do as much for God as I can. I find myself vigilant for opportunities to share the Gospel. I have a basket of little rubber Jesus figures on my desk at work, and if someone is having a rough day I tell them to take one because they need a little Jesus in their day! It's goofy, but it's always a conversation starter.

Brandie

It wasn't as though we didn't know about God. Both Mark and I were connected to the Catholic church, even married in one. Mark and our son, Austin, were baptized on the same day in the Catholic church. As for me, I grew up going to a Catholic school. I read the Bible, I went to mass every Sunday... but I was just going through the motions.

Coming to The River was different. Now there's intent and desire behind the time I spend with God in his Word. In the past, our participation in "church stuff" was motivated by a desire to meet others' expectations.

We never really desired God for himself. Our relationship with him has completely changed while being at The River Church.

We actually come to church and serve because we want to! We've experienced life transformation through The River and its community. Mark and I would both agree, if it weren't for The River community, especially our small group, we wouldn't have survived the hard season where Mark struggled with medication after several surgeries.

Mark & Brandie

This new relationship with God has given us new purposes. First, we serve the church by helping with baptism classes and following up with those who are baptized. Second, and probably the most important change for us, is that we have a sense that our legacy has changed. The seeds we're planting now are seeds of faith, hope, and Gospel in the lives of our kids and grandkids. At this point in our life, our family and what we get to pass on to them, is so important. We now feel like we really have something lasting and true to pass on to them. We get to pass on the new life we have in Christ.



**"IF IT WEREN'T
FOR THE RIVER...
WE WOULDN'T
HAVE SURVIVED
THE HARD
SEASON..."**

Week Three



PREPARING FOR A MIRACLE

BEYOND



Message Notes



20 horizontal lines for writing notes on page 62.

20 horizontal lines for writing notes on page 63.

group guide

KEY VERSE

Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

EPHESIANS 3:20-21, NASB

KEY THOUGHT

A biblical miracle happens when there is a need sensed by a group of people, led by God, to respond in faith.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Where are you in the process right now: surrendering to God; hearing His voice; obeying what He says; or believing God to do a miracle through you?*
2. *Which step in the process is the most difficult or scary?*
3. *Why do you think God invites us to participate in His miracle process? Why not just do it all Himself?*
4. *What do you think God may be teaching you through this process?*
5. *Do we sometimes resist stepping out and participating with God? Why is that?*
6. *2 Corinthians 9:10 says that God “supplies seed to the sower.” What does this mean to you? How does it impact your level of generosity?*
7. *There are three levels of giving:
(1) What can I afford?
(2) What can I sacrifice?
(3) What can God do through me?
Discuss the difference between these levels.*
8. *Have you ever given something beyond what you could afford? If so, what happened as a result?*

APPLICATION QUESTION

In what area of your life do you need a miracle? (Examples: your health, marriage, finances, job, child, etc.)



YOUR INVITATION

When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.

JOHN 6:5-6, NIV

The story of the loaves and fish is the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels. The principle of repetition tells us this story stands out. It's significant. Jesus performed the miracle and fed over 5,000 men and their families with only a single, small lunch.

The setting for this miracle is also significant. It began with a large crowd of people who were hungry. Jesus asked His disciples where they should buy bread to feed them all. This was impossible. He was inviting His disciples into the problem so they would understand the need. The verse says that He did this to test them, for He already knew what He was going to do.

In the natural, the situation was impossible. Philip responded to Jesus, *"It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"* But this is exactly the type of situation that allows God to show off. Luke 18:27 says, "What is impossible with man is possible with God." When you find yourself in a situation that seems impossible, remember this story. God may be inviting you into a problem that He already has a solution for.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME?

HOW CAN I APPLY IT?

TALK TO GOD ABOUT IT.

WHAT'S GOD DOING IN YOUR LIFE THROUGH BEYOND?
SHARE YOUR STORY WITH US AT: MY.THERIVER.CC/SHARE

Tuesday

HOW A MIRACLE WORKS

But He answered, "You give them something to eat."
 MARK 6:37, NIV

There are three ingredients to every miracle in the Bible. First, there is a need. Jesus had been teaching all day and it was getting late. The people were getting hungry and needed to eat. At this time in history, especially in this part of the world, starvation was a real and present threat. Missing a meal was a big deal, and the need was real.

Second, the need is sensed by a group of people. The disciples did something right—they brought the need to Jesus! But what's amazing is that Jesus not only had a solution, but He invited them to take part in the miracle. It's the same for us today. We can't simply ask God to do miracles without our participation. As any good father, God wants us to grow as much as He wants to solve our problems. So what He chooses to do time and again is invite us to be part of the process.

Finally, a group of people step out in faith regardless of the odds. Jesus' disciples found the boy with the loaves and fish. His disciples sat everyone down to eat. His disciples even picked up the leftover food when everyone was done. They played a part in this miracle. It's the same today. When there is a need, sensed by a group of people, who step out in faith, regardless of the odds, God does miracles.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME?

HOW CAN I APPLY IT?

TALK TO GOD ABOUT IT.

WHAT'S GOD DOING IN YOUR LIFE THROUGH BEYOND?
 SHARE YOUR STORY WITH US AT: MY.THERIVER.CC/SHARE

wednesday

GIVING UP YOUR LUNCH

Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?

JOHN 6:9, NIV

For God to perform the miracle, there was a boy who had to give up his lunch. Think about it. He was the only person in the crowd who didn't need a miracle. He had his lunch. It was everyone else who was hungry!

That's the real challenge. You may be like the boy. You may be comfortable and already have what you need. But God asks you to give it up so He can use it to bless others. It takes a shift in your perspective. You begin to see that you are blessed in order to be a blessing.

But then there's a second challenge. Not only did the boy have to give up his lunch, but his lunch was so insignificant when compared to the size of the crowd. How could his sacrifice even matter? In the natural, it makes no sense. But Jesus took what little was given and turned it into an abundance. He is the God of "more than enough." It's the same for us. We give in faith because God asks for it, not because it makes sense. It doesn't matter how much you have. God is not looking at the size of your bank account. He's looking at your faith and obedience. And in His hands, He can turn our gifts into an abundance.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME?

HOW CAN I APPLY IT?

TALK TO GOD ABOUT IT.

Thursday

GOD OF MIRACLES

He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed, miracles that cannot be counted.
 JOB 5:9, NIV

Preparing for a miracle begins with what you believe about God. The pages of the Bible are filled with stories of God's miraculous power. But sometimes it's easy to think of those Bible stories simply as "stories"—something that happened a long time ago. We wonder if God does miracles today.

This same doubt existed during Jesus' earthly ministry. Matthew 13:58 tells us that the people from Jesus' own hometown took offense with Him and that *"he did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief"* (CSB). Now, this verse doesn't mean God is dependent on our faith in order to move. He is God, independent of us. Yet, we can't ignore the connection between our faith and God's miracles. The foundation for a miracle is the belief that God performs miracles.

Remember our key verse for the Beyond journey, Ephesians 3:20, *"Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think"* (NASB). As a church, we are believing for God to do an incredible financial miracle on our behalf. But what about you, on a personal level? What need do you have in your life today? Is there something that seems impossible? Bring your need to God. Ask in faith. Believe that He will work on your behalf. You may find the God of miracles alive and well today!

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME?

HOW CAN I APPLY IT?

TALK TO GOD ABOUT IT.

WHAT'S GOD DOING IN YOUR LIFE THROUGH BEYOND?
 SHARE YOUR STORY WITH US AT: [MY.THERIVER.CC/SHARE](https://my.river.cc/share)

friday

BEYOND

Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us...

EPHESIANS 3:20, NASB

Is there something in your life so impossible that you can only ask God to do it? Is there something so impossible that you can hardly imagine it? Ephesians 3:20 says that you serve a God who can meet that need and exceed your wildest imagination. He goes beyond what you can ask or think.

When it comes to what you can give in the Beyond journey, there are three levels of giving to consider. The first level is what you can afford. This is what you can easily give. It's what you can fit into your budget. It's a gift, and it's entirely possible.

The second level of giving is what you can sacrifice. This goes a step further. It's no longer safe. At this level you have to give something up. Maybe it's your morning coffee, a new flat-screen TV, a family vacation, or a house renovation. Whatever it is, it's a sacrifice—but it's still possible.

This leads you to the final level of giving, which is what you can trust God to do through you. This is the supernatural level. This is the miraculous. This is beyond what you can calculate and beyond what you can sacrifice. It's something only God can do. How amazing would it be to hear God, step out in faith, and go beyond yourself to experience what only God can do?

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME?

HOW CAN I APPLY IT?

TALK TO GOD ABOUT IT.

WHAT'S GOD DOING IN YOUR LIFE THROUGH BEYOND?
SHARE YOUR STORY WITH US AT: MY.THERIVER.CC/SHARE

Michelle & Jesi



Michelle

It was 10 or 11 years ago that my friend was in the hospital, having lost her newborn son. Even in the midst of her grief, my friend kept telling me about how Pastor Matthew came and prayed with her and her family before he died. She wouldn't stop talking about The River Church! It caught my attention so much that when she invited me one day, I said, 'Okay!' The very first service I was here for, Pastor Matthew said something that made The River stick with me. He said, "We're all jacked up!" Funny as it is, that's what hooked me! It was that sense that we didn't have to look or dress or be a certain way to be welcome at The River. With that and the fact that my kids had a blast every week, it was clear that this was the place for us.

Over the years, I've ended up being part of several life groups, but I hit a rut recently. The more involved my kids got in things like dance or sports, the more I felt like an Uber Driver! Then the real rut hit when my mom died. It was difficult to want to get up and do anything. That's when The River started going through SEEDS. Every Sunday we were talking about joining a life group and I just knew that I had to make it work. The first night came and I was nervous; it'd been awhile and I didn't know who was going to be there when I walked in. Thankfully, there was one person I knew, and I was looking forward to getting to know the rest.

In the second week, I found myself at a low place. I was really upset, but when the group asked about it, I didn't even know why I felt that way! Then this new acquaintance, someone who just joined the church from our merger with Lakeview, gave me a "mom hug." When she saw me later at Freedom Nights she told me that she had "adopted" me. It was a huge comfort to know that I wasn't alone even though my mom wasn't here anymore. The love and guidance of my group has helped me remember my life in Jesus. I found myself wanting to serve in River Access again, to be part of the community, and to lead my kids. When I think about it, it all comes down to community! Connecting to my friend in the middle of her grief is what started the journey to where I am today and seeing how she handled the loss of her son is another major part of how God has comforted me in the middle of losing my mom.

At every turn, God has used people in my life, even my own daughter, to show me that he loves me and will keep pursuing me. When people ask me, "What kind of church is The River?" I tell them: the kind that you go to!

I tell people the truth, that you can literally walk in and look any way you want and they'll welcome you. In fact, God has been teaching me how to plant seeds all over lately, by both sharing my faith with others and taking time to grow my faith through the Word of God. I used to be afraid of offending people, but I've just decided that I don't care. No one has to listen to me if I'm talking! I've already seen God work to show himself to people in my life.

I've seen God bless others through my loss the same way I was blessed through my friend's loss. God can take anything and use it for good. The more I get to know God, the more I see greater freedoms in my life and in the lives of those around me. I'm more certain of the purposes God has for me; I know that he'll take care of me and my family. God had others plant seeds in me that I didn't even know about until recently, so I can't wait to see what he does with the next 10 years!

Jesi

My Mom brought my brother and I to church since we were little. I've been a part of The River Church most of my life. In recent years, I was what you would call a "lukewarm" Christian. I'd go to church, I'd serve, but I didn't apply anything that I was learning to my life. There was this hole that I kept feeling in my heart. I was mean and argumentative to people, so much so that I lost friends because of how I was acting. I could see the damage that I was causing and I wanted to change. Then I heard a message that hit the nail on the head. It was all about how God wanted us to be more than just "lukewarm" and how we could make steps toward a closer relationship with God. That message made me realize how I was living. It challenged me to something better.

I started paying attention to what I was learning, pushing myself to know God more. That's when I started thinking about getting baptized. I realized that I had accepted Jesus as my savior, but I had never made it public. My thought was, "well now I have nothing to hide" so I might as well be baptized! I didn't act on it right away, though. I kept pushing it off. Then my grandmother got sick. While we were visiting her, right before she passed away, I was hit by a realization: tomorrow isn't promised. You can't trust that tomorrow will be there! Why keep waiting to take the next step? I needed to step into what God was asking of me now. That weekend, I talked to Sam, my youth pastor, and told him I needed to be baptized right then and there! So during the third service, I did!

God has been calling me into discovering my purpose and finding freedom through The River Church. I have this enthusiasm that I never had before, and I've found freedom from so much of my previous anger. The excitement is something that I don't feel I can keep in. I make more friends and can't help but invite them to church. I also try to get a lot of my friends to serve! Getting involved is so important to feeling connected with other believers. I want them to experience the love that comes with serving others and being part of a community. Really, the core desire of my heart is to give people God's grace through how I interact with them. It's exactly that multiplying idea that Pastor Amy talked about the other week! The joy I feel from the Holy Spirit is what I want to share with others so they can continue to pass it on. The dreams for my future have changed; I want to serve people, provide them with hope and a future the same way God has done for me.

Week Four



LEAVING A LEGACY

BEYOND

Message Notes



18 horizontal lines for writing notes on page 80.

18 horizontal lines for writing notes on page 81.

group guide

KEY VERSE

You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.
2 CORINTHIANS 9:11, NIV

KEY THOUGHT

Legacy can't be contained by buildings—our legacy will be what God does through the lives of people and future generations.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you think of when you hear the word “legacy”?
2. Why is intentionality necessary to pass on the right legacy?
3. What personal legacy do you want to pass on to others in your life?
4. Read Ephesians 3:20-21 in NASB version. What is the spiritual legacy we are passing on to the next generation at The River Church?
5. What is our Beyond journey really about? How would you describe what we're doing?
6. According to 2 Corinthians 9:11, why does God enrich and bless us? What is the purpose?
7. How has God already enriched your life and blessed you?
8. In light of God's blessing, what's a practical way you could be a blessing to others?

APPLICATION QUESTION

Who is your “one”—someone in your life who needs Jesus?



GOD'S VISION

Where there is no vision, the people perish...
PROVERBS 29:18, KJV

Vision is a powerful motivator. When we receive and embrace God's vision for our lives, He empowers us to work together toward the fulfillment of that vision. Just imagine what God could do if we tapped into His vision for our lives, our church, and our community.

Here are three characteristics of a vision that's from God. First, God's vision always aligns with His mission and is bigger than you. If you can accomplish it in your own strength, it's probably not God. Our entire Beyond journey is a God-size vision that only He can do. Second, God's vision always releases passion in you. God's vision will not let you go. It draws you in. It captivates you and pulls you toward God's goal for your life.

Finally, God's vision impacts future generations. Psalm 127:1 (NKJV) says, *"Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it,"* and verse 3 continues, *"Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord."* You see, a God-vision is something that can only be accomplished through Him, but it ultimately has to do with family. It leaves a lasting impact that is felt for generations.

What we're building at The River Church isn't really about buildings. It's about family. It's about building something beyond ourselves for the generations behind us. What do you think God's vision for your life looks like? How do you think that vision could impact others?

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME?

HOW CAN I APPLY IT?

TALK TO GOD ABOUT IT.

WHAT'S GOD DOING IN YOUR LIFE THROUGH BEYOND?
 SHARE YOUR STORY WITH US AT: MY.THERIVER.CC/SHARE

Tuesday

YOUR LEGACY

Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments.

DEUTERONOMY 7:9, NIV

What do you think of when you think about leaving a legacy? Some may think of leaving a great business or organization. Some may think of leaving wealth and possessions. Others may think of the family they leave behind or even the way people talk about their character. But in all of these examples, one thing is consistent. A legacy has to do with what you leave behind. It's how people will remember you one day.

This raises an important question: What will your legacy be? You can live for selfish goals or momentary pleasures, or you can decide to leave a spiritual legacy for future generations.

According to Deuteronomy 7:9, your legacy is tied to your relationship with God. Think about that. The legacy you leave for your children and grandchildren flows out of your love for God and your obedience to Him. That's why this Beyond journey is so important. It's a practical way to get closer to God's heart and step out in obedience. When you understand and embrace God's vision for your life, you can leave a legacy of righteousness for those who follow you.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME?

HOW CAN I APPLY IT?

TALK TO GOD ABOUT IT.

wednesday

BUILDING GOD'S HOUSE

Moreover, because I have set my affection on the house of my God, I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, my own special treasure of gold and silver.

1 CHRONICLES 29:3, NKJV

In the Old Testament, the temple of God had great significance for Israel. It was the dwelling place of God's presence among His people. In preparing to build the temple, King David made all the necessary preparations and gave extravagantly from his own resources. But notice how he connects his heart to his gift,

"Because I have set my affection on the house of my God, I have given to the house of my God." While some may have given lip service to God's house, David demonstrated his heart by what he gave. Centuries later, Jesus would echo this same idea in Matthew 6:21 when He said, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (ESV).

There are a lot of causes out there and tons of places you can invest your time, talent, and treasure. But none is more powerful than the local church. One of the most amazing things about giving to build God's church is that it will change your heart. If you want to have a greater heart for God and for His kingdom, invest in what He's doing. Where is your heart today?

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME?

HOW CAN I APPLY IT?

TALK TO GOD ABOUT IT.

WHAT'S GOD DOING IN YOUR LIFE THROUGH BEYOND?
SHARE YOUR STORY WITH US AT: MY.THERIVER.CC/SHARE

Thursday

CONSECRATION

Who then is willing to consecrate himself this day to the Lord? Then the leaders of the fathers' houses, leaders of the tribes of Israel, the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the officers over the king's work, offered willingly... Then the people rejoiced, for they had offered willingly to the Lord...

1 CHRONICLES 29:5B-6,9A, NKJV

David gave his wealth to build God's temple. Then the leaders of Israel gave, followed by the people. But there was a process they all went through first—a process of consecration.

The word “consecrate” means “to set apart.” The people first set themselves apart for God. They determined in their hearts that they would belong to God. They would do things His way, not theirs. And it's something they were willing to do. Then the evidence of their consecration was expressed... through giving. Notice the verses say they “offered willingly.” Not out of compulsion. Not because they had to. But because they wanted to give to God.

Here's the principle: Willful consecration leads to willful giving. You start with surrender, and out of a heart of consecration comes an offering. Are you willing to be set apart for God? Will you join God on this journey in consecrating your heart, your life, and your finances to Him? Imagine what God could do through you as you give willingly to build His kingdom.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME?

HOW CAN I APPLY IT?

TALK TO GOD ABOUT IT.

WHAT'S GOD DOING IN YOUR LIFE THROUGH BEYOND?
SHARE YOUR STORY WITH US AT: MY.THERIVER.CC/SHARE

friday

IF YOU BELIEVE

Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?"

JOHN 11:40, NIV

Sometimes it can be difficult to get around our own logical thoughts to make room for God. Jesus faced the same type of skepticism in His ministry. In John 11:40, Jesus spoke these words to Martha after her brother Lazarus had died. He instructed that the tomb stone be rolled away, and Mary questioned Jesus' logic. It made no sense. Lazarus had been dead four days. There was an odor! Jesus simply encouraged Martha to believe, and she would see miracles. And Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead!

To experience God's power in our lives, we must remove any limitations we have placed on Him. In all of our knowledge, we must make room for what is beyond our comprehension. The God who created everything desires nothing more than to show up in your world in miraculous, unexplainable ways, if you believe.

That's what the Beyond journey is all about. It's about hearing from God, stepping out in faith, and seeing God do a miracle. Take a moment to reflect on our theme verses one more time:

Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. (Ephesians 3:20-1, NASB).

What miracle are you believing God to do in your life, in your family, and in your community today?

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Zach & Danya



Zach

God has the ability to redeem everything for good, to surprise us and bring us joy the more we know him. That truth is woven into my and Danya's story

We've both been in jail. We were addicted to drugs and struggling to find stability in life. I had been in and out of jail since I was 15 years old. When I was arrested 6 years ago, I faced 32 years in prison. There's not a lot lower you can get than that.

Somehow, God broke through in the middle of that darkness. While I was in solitary I had an iPad. I started listening to sermons all day, every day until that battery died. Jesus found me at the absolute lowest and invited me into a new life.

Danya

Zach and I got out of jail, but our kids were in foster care. While still in the early days of being clean, we got a job with Jonathan Derby. I was still struggling with this whole God thing, but Jonathan's care and compassion was so shocking to us, so different from the other people we'd been around, that when he invited us to

The River Church, we jumped in. God started growing new life in us immediately! Let's be clear, it's not that we suddenly were full of the fruit of the Spirit overnight. What was real, though, was that we could see the little fruit growing in us, and it was so much better than the life we lived beforehand. Even though days were hard, and we had to wait patiently and work diligently to get our kids back and find stable footing in our lives, God has always given us the strength we need every day.

Jesus brought us complete freedom from our addiction; it's not something that any human on their own could do. It's something that only he could have done for us.

Zach

The true freedom you can find in Christ is one of the things that I always talk to inmates about. I work as peer support with people in jail, helping them find freedom while they're incarcerated so they keep that freedom when they get out. I look like one of them. You can tell where I've been, they know that I know what I'm talking about when it comes to drugs and jail.

So when I tell them that when you serve and chase after God, the spiritual high you get from that is something that no drug can compare to, they know that I know what I'm talking about. They can think I'm crazy, but I tell them that if they ask, God will reveal himself and amaze them.

God continues to call us into new purposes too. When I was young, I dreamed of being a rap artist, but secular rap music had a really bad effect on me. When I became a Christian, I gave that up. We gave up a lot of things. We changed the shows we watched, the music we listened to... If it was going to glorify sin, God didn't want that for us. Now, years later, God is opening doors for me to pursue that dream, doors I didn't even know were there for me to knock on! When I aligned myself to his will, he put that dream back in my life.

Zach & Danya

Once we had both experienced the presence of Jesus in our lives, we knew that merely finding "stability" in a worldly sense wasn't going to cut it.

God was clear about where he needed us. Now we're doing what we never thought possible. We are both leaders in the recovery community. Danya is the director of Lotus Recovery and helps lead Brianna's Hope meetings. Neither of us ever thought we'd end up doing ministry in the recovery community. We wanted to get clean, we wanted to find stability, but the more we found Jesus, the more we wanted others to know him! We knew we couldn't just sit idly; God wanted to tell his story through us. We wanted everyone else to hear the truth too.

The truth is, you don't have to stay bound in chains; you don't have to stay bound to the mindset of the enemy. You don't have to be weighed down with your addiction or sin. Look what we did before we knew Jesus and see how God brought us freedom in spite of that! Everything God continues to do in our lives only makes us want to chase him, serve him, and know him more.



"THE TRUTH IS, YOU DON'T HAVE TO STAY BOUND IN CHAINS; YOU DON'T HAVE TO STAY BOUND TO THE MINDSET OF THE ENEMY. YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE WEIGHED DOWN WITH YOUR ADDICTION OR SIN."

Week Five

CELEBRATING THE JOURNEY

BEYOND

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group guide

KEY VERSE

Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! ... For there the LORD commanded the blessing, life forevermore.

PSALM 133:1, 3B, ESV

KEY THOUGHT

When God's people step out together in faith and unity, He does miracles.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. *What's something God has done in your life during our Beyond journey?*
2. *Have you ever felt challenged to step out in faith?*
3. *Have you heard God speak to you for the first time?*
4. *Has He already started to show up in miraculous ways?*
5. *Has He done a work in your heart as you surrendered to Him?*

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THE BLESSING OF UNITY

*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity! ...
For there the Lord commanded the blessing—life forevermore.*

PSALM 133:1,3B, NASB

One of the incredible distinctives of The River Church is that we are an “everyone church.” We’re not a group where only a few “spiritual people” do all the work. We all pitch in. We all play a part. That includes you! And that’s why our Beyond journey has been so amazing. It’s something we’ve done together. We heard from God. We stepped out in faith. We gave our gifts. And we did it together. Everyone. Not equal gifts, but equal sacrifice.

There’s a word that’s sometimes used in our English language called “synergy.” Synergy is defined as “the cooperation of two or more things to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of the individual parts.” In essence, synergy means we accomplish more together. This is exactly what happens when God’s people come together in unity to achieve God’s vision. Think of it like this:

Our unity + God’s supernatural power = Miraculous results

As we wrap up our journey this week, take some time to reflect on everything God has done. What has He done in you? What has He done in our church? Reflect on His blessings and His goodness. And remember, this is only the beginning. God always has a next step and more to give!

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Tuesday

TWO OR MORE

"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

MATTHEW 18:20, NKJV

As a believer in Christ, God is always with you. The Bible repeatedly teaches that His Spirit dwells in you (Romans 8:11; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 5:18; 2 Timothy 1:14, to list just a few). Yet Jesus makes the incredible promise that if two or more gather together in His name, He will be with us.

You see, something special happens when believers come together, unified in the name of Jesus. There is an expression of His presence that is uniquely sensed when we come together. It's why people visit The River and talk about the friendliness or the warmth they feel, or the presence they sense during worship. It's Jesus! When we come together, He is with us in a unique and discernible way.

What's even more amazing is that in the prior verse, Jesus says, *"If two of you agree on earth about anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven"* (Matthew 18:19, ESV). Here's the takeaway: When God's people gather together, in agreement, in His name, He hears us and He is with us!

Throughout Beyond, we got to experience what Jesus promised. We joined together in unity as a church family. And He was with us every step of the way. He answered our prayers. Is there something amazing God did in your life during our journey together?

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wednesday

SOWING AND REAPING

The person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the person who sows generously will also reap generously.

2 CORINTHIANS 9:6, CSB

Throughout the Bible we find the principle of sowing and reaping. It's a universal truth. And it's something that can work for you or against you, depending on what you do. But Paul takes the principle a step further in 2 Corinthians 9:6. Not only will you reap what you sow, but the more you sow, the more you will reap. Here's what that means: Do you want more of God's blessing on your life? Then sow more seed!

Jesus said something similar in Luke 6:38 (NLT): "Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back."

Listen, the Bible is not just referring to money here. When you give in any area of life, it puts God in a position to bless you for your act of obedience.

Now, we don't give in order to get. Yet we understand God's principle still works. The more you sow, the more you will reap. And remember: You can't out-give God. Whenever you give to God, He always repays and blesses you even more in return. So keep your expectation and faith level high. God's blessing is on the way!

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Thursday

SEED FOR THE SOWER

He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.

2 CORINTHIANS 9:10, ESV

It's true that you reap what you sow. It's also true that the more you sow, the more you will reap. But have you ever stopped to consider where the seed comes from in the first place? Think about it. Where does the ability to give anything come from? According to 2 Corinthians 9:10, the ability to give comes from God. It is God "who supplies seed to the sower." So if you want to sow into God's kingdom, He provides the seed!

Here's what that means for you today. Maybe you went on this Beyond journey and asked God to speak to you. Maybe you felt God tell you to give something crazy, something beyond what's even possible. And if so, here's the good news: You don't have to worry. You don't have to wonder where the provision will come from. God will supply the seed. In fact, He wants to multiply your seed so you can give even more. And then He will bless you in return. It's a beautiful cycle of obedience, provision, and blessing.

So remember, whenever God asks you to give, He isn't trying to get something from you—He wants to get something to you. He will provide the seed. You simply have to obey. And the end result is a harvest of righteousness!

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME?

HOW CAN I APPLY IT?

TALK TO GOD ABOUT IT.

friday

HEAVEN'S JOY

I tell you, in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who don't need repentance.

LUKE 15:7, CSB

Here we are, at the end of our journey. How does it feel? We hope you've heard from God and been impacted along the way. We hope you've stepped out in faith and believed God for a miracle. And we hope this is only the beginning of an amazing new life—of surrendering, hearing God's voice, stepping out in faith, and seeing Him do miracles. What an incredible way to live!

And yet, at the end of it all, we need to remember the reason we went on this journey to begin with. Yes, it was to encounter God. Yes, it was to see Him move. But even more, the reason for our journey was very simple: To see lost people come to Christ!

This is God's mission. It's never changed. And neither has the mission of The River Church. We've always been about helping lost people Know God, Find Freedom, Discover their Purpose and Make a Difference. Everything you've given is to help make room for more people to come to Christ.

So spend a moment today and ask yourself, "Who is someone I know who still needs Jesus?" Write their name in the space below, and say a prayer for them today. Let's believe God to go beyond what we could ask or even imagine!

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What is the most important step we can take with God? **The next one.**

No matter where we are in our walk with Christ, there's always a next step.

*"If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and **follow me.**"*
(Matthew 16:24)

Enter the Journey. This Guide is designed to equip you for the journey, show you how to engage your faith in new ways, and help you grow in your relationship with Christ. Together, we'll learn how to take our next steps into the beyond where God is headed.

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