



ROOTED

A 10-WEEK DISCIPLESHIP
EXPERIENCE

SAMPLE BOOK

WORKBOOK & FACILITATOR GUIDE





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EXPERIENCE

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ROOTED WORKBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Rooted and the next chapter of your story. Our goal for this experience is for you to deepen your connection with God, His church, and your purpose in the epic story He is writing through human history.

Beyond a program, seminar, or small group, Rooted is a catalyst for life-change. Rooted provokes questions, conversations, and beyond-what-is-comfortable group experiences that are designed to help you find yourself in God's story. You will begin to see God in new ways and hear His voice in surprising places. In a world that can be fragmented, isolated, and empty, Rooted allows you to experience a different way of life: community, intimacy, and generosity. Through this experience we hope you will be emboldened to live out your calling as a radical follower of Jesus. The word radical comes from the Latin root "radix," meaning "a root." By rooting ourselves in God's Word and His truths, we have a firm foundation on which we love the world.

Throughout this workbook, we have included stories from great leaders and pastors from all over the world to broaden your perspective and challenge your understanding of the global Church. When we listen and learn from believers around the world, we gain a deeper understanding of the whole Gospel.

Rooted is a significant commitment. We want to be up-front about that, but anything worth doing involves a certain amount of sacrifice. During the 10-week experience, you will go through various individual exercises (daily Bible and commentary reading, journaling, and prayer) and then meet weekly in your groups to talk about what you have learned. You will be surprised what happens when your group gathers and begins to honestly share. What God is doing in the group soon becomes the curriculum as the Holy Spirit moves people to open up and share personal stories and feelings. This is where transformation happens.

There are three additional experiences designed to deepen some of the areas we explore. We'll pray and fast together, share our faith, and serve together. On top of these experiences, we'll also discuss where we are in our journey with Jesus. No matter where you stand in your relationship with Jesus at the beginning of Rooted, there is always room to move forward. For some of us that may mean deciding for the first time to follow Jesus and/or getting baptized. For others it will mean letting go of the things of this world to follow His call more courageously. These kinds of defining moments will mean your life will never be the same. After our 10 weeks together, we'll join with all the other Rooted groups to celebrate the journey.

Come with an open heart and mind, and see how God will surprise you!

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HOW DOES GOD SPEAK TO US?

WEEK 3

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WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE:

Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

- EPHESIANS 6:17-18

DAY 1

THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

As we saw yesterday, God has a variety of ways to communicate with you. There is none more foundational than through the Bible. Among other things, the Bible is called the Holy Spirit's sword. "...and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17).

The Bible is also called God's Word because it is authored by God. In other words, it is not a book that originates from human minds, but from God – it is God-breathed.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

- 2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

How could the Bible claim to have been written by humans and also by God?

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

- 1 PETER 1:20-21

The Bible is relevant today and God uses it to instruct and bless us.

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

- HEBREWS 4:12

This notion of the Bible being composed by both God and humans is called "dual authorship." The message originates from God, but He implants His thoughts into the human author. The writer, in turn, uses his style and personality to communicate the message. It is clear that the final product, in its original form, was without error and exactly what God wanted to communicate (the theological term is "inerrant").

Calling the Bible "a book" is a bit of a misnomer. It is really more of a small library. It's a collection of 66 books written by 40 different authors in three languages (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek) over a period of about 1,500 years. Amazingly, even with so many different authors (most of whom never knew each other) from completely different cultures and writing from three different continents, the Bible has a consistent theme.

It is the story of how God relates to humans. More specifically, every book points to the main character: Jesus Christ. The Old Testament (written before Jesus) points to the need for a Savior to come, and the New Testament communicates how Jesus filled that need.

There are many proofs to verify that the Bible is true, including a substantial number of historical and archeological discoveries that verify what the Bible teaches. A noted archeologist, Dr. Nelson Glueck, was quoted in a book review for *The New York Times* as saying, “No discovery has ever been made that contradicts or controverts historical statements of Scripture.”

There are also a number of prophecies (predictions) written in the Old Testament that come to pass in the New Testament. For instance, dozens of messianic prophecies were made hundreds of years before Jesus Christ came and He fulfilled every one of them including where He would be born, what His ministry would be like, and how He would die (even describing death on a cross centuries before that form of torture was invented – see Psalm 22). The fulfillment of prophecies has always been one of the primary proofs for biblical divine authorship.

How are we sure what was originally written by authors like Moses, David, and Paul is the same as what the Bible says today? For centuries manuscripts were hand-copied down through the ages and the accuracy of what we have today is based on how well they were preserved. We have good reason to be confident in their authenticity. Because of the great reverence the Jewish scribes held toward the Scriptures, they exercised extreme care in making new copies of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament). The entire copying process was specified in meticulous detail to minimize the possibility of even the slightest error. The number of letters, words, and lines were counted. If a single mistake was discovered, the entire manuscript would be destroyed. The church scribes of the New Testament had similar thorough guidelines as to how they made copies.

Scholars of almost every theological stripe attest to the profound care with which the New Testament books were copied in the original language. We have over 5,000 manuscripts and manuscript fragments of portions of the New Testament that have been preserved from the early centuries of Christianity. Overall, 97-99% of the New Testament can be reconstructed beyond any reasonable doubt, and no Christian doctrine is founded solely or even primarily on textually disputed passages.

- CRAIG BLOMBERG, REASONABLE FAITH

When we pick up our Bibles, we can be confident we are reading what God intends for us to read. But knowing we have God’s Word is only half the battle.

DAY 2

GOD SPEAKS

Most of us have had that frustrating mobile phone call where the person on the other end keeps cutting out. You may be talking (on hands-free of course), in the middle of a long story or a funny joke or a serious problem, only to realize the call was dropped miles back. Don't you hate that?

Is that how our communication is with God? We think we are in conversation with Him, but are we really sure He's up there taking our call? How will we hear what He has to say to us?

Throughout history, God has demonstrated His desire to communicate to us. Whether it was speaking to Adam and Eve in the garden, warning Noah of the flood to come, calling Abraham to be the father of a great nation, giving Moses the Ten Commandments, God reached out. In the New Testament, God's desire to speak directly to us becomes even more evident.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ...The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. ... No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

- JOHN 1:1, 14, 18

The embodiment of God in the person of Jesus was God's ultimate expression of His desire to communicate to us in a way we could grasp. In the passage above, we see that the word, "Word" means Jesus, the Son of God. The writer, John, is introducing Jesus with a word or a term that both his Jewish and Gentile readers would have been familiar with. For example, in the Old Testament, the "word" of God is often personified as an instrument for the execution of God's will (Psalm 33:6; 107:20; 119:89; 147:15-18). So, for his Jewish readers, by introducing Jesus as the "Word," John is in a sense pointing them back to the Old Testament where the "Word" of God is associated with the personification of God's revelation. And in Greek philosophy, the term "Word" was used to describe the agency by which God created material things and communicated with them. So, in the Greek worldview, the Word was thought of as a bridge between God and man.

Then, as we saw in our reading yesterday, God sent His Spirit to continue the communication. "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my

name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (John 14:26).

Salvation in Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit allow us to have a personal and intimate relationship with God. Saying yes to Jesus means we now stand rightly connected to God and are able to grow into that relationship. One of the most awe-inspiring parts of this new relationship is that God – the Creator of the universe – wants to speak with us. Because God is personal, He desires to connect with us and lead us into greater intimacy with Him. Central to intimacy is communication. We can learn to listen to God’s voice by paying attention to the ways He speaks to us. First, God speaks to us through His creation.

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

- PSALM 19:1-4

Because God made the whole world and universe, it makes sense that by observing His work we could learn a lot about Him. When we look carefully at the things He has made, we see His beauty, creativity, power, ingenuity, knowledge, organization, purpose, wisdom, mercy and grace. The Bible argues that a design as magnificent as creation leads us to believe in a Grand Designer. So much so, the Bible says we have no excuse not to see the fingerprints of God in His work.

For since the creation of the world, God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

- ROMANS 1:20

God also speaks to us through other people. We see examples of people hearing the words of God through a human voice. For instance, Jethro gives his son-in-law, Moses, godly leadership wisdom in Exodus 18. Deborah tells an Israeli general named Barak that God wants him to attack their enemy in Judges 4. Samuel is God’s mouthpiece to tell Jesse that his son, David, will be the next king in 1 Samuel 16. Daniel communicates God’s plan for the future to King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2. In the New Testament, we see in Acts 15 that Peter speaks for God when he insists that new converts to Christianity don’t have to first be circumcised in Acts 15.

God continues to speak today to you through other people. This is one of the reasons it is so important for us to be part of a church and to connect with other Christ-followers. The Bible tells us God puts different people with different gifts in each

church body. The result is a group of people who are mutually dependent on each other to hear God's voice. As you talk and pray with other believers about an issue you're facing, God will often use their words to tell you how to handle it and move forward. Seeking Christian counsel is often a wise way to hear from God.

Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.

- PROVERBS 15:22

A third way God communicates with us is through circumstances. Here we need to be careful because Satan can use circumstances to distract us. But there is no question God will arrange circumstances in such a way as to give us direction. We see an example of this in the Apostle Paul's travels.

Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

- ACTS 16:6-10

As Paul traveled, he saw God's Spirit behind his circumstances. We get the idea that when circumstances would change Paul's plans, he would pray and open himself up to what God wanted to tell him – a great model for us to practice.

Another way God speaks is through supernatural means. He spoke to Moses through a burning bush (Exodus 3), to Balaam through his donkey (Numbers 22), to Gideon through an angel (Judges 6), and to Isaiah in a powerful vision (Isaiah 6). Do you believe God still speaks to His people in these ways? If you have your doubts because you think no rational person could believe such things, reconsider. Depending on the circumstances and whom God is trying to reach, He may still use miraculous ways to speak. Two ways God speaks to us, through the Bible and through prayer, will be examined in more depth in the next three readings. God also uses dreams, visions, and to some people, an audible voice. It is most important for us to remember, regardless of the means, God indeed speaks to us, and whatever He says should be met with a commitment on our part to listen and obey. A phrase Jesus used often as He taught was, "To him who has ears to hear, let him hear." In other words, don't just listen to what God has to say...hear Him.

DAY 3

OUR DIVINE HELPER

From the moment we ask Jesus into our lives and accept God's gift of reconciliation and eternal life, something supernatural is born in us. As 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"*

But how can we live this new life? How do we begin to step into the salvation purchased for us by Christ? Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to live in us and to empower us to live a different way. Charles Stanley puts it this way, "The Holy Spirit has been sent by the Father to assist you in all the practical matters of Christian living. He is your number one helper."

Last week we were introduced to the Holy Spirit in the story of creation. In Genesis 1, we read that the Spirit "hovers" or "broods" over the waters of chaos as God brings the universe into existence. Then in Genesis 2, God breathes His breath (His Spirit) into a lump of clay and makes a living being: man.

As the Old Testament continues to unfold, we see the Holy Spirit interacting with believers in various ways. The Holy Spirit was involved in helping the Jews escape Egypt (Isaiah 63:11). He gave Daniel the ability to interpret dreams (Daniel 4:8). David became so dependent on the Holy Spirit, he pleaded with God not to take Him away (Psalm 51:11).

In the Gospels, we see the Holy Spirit as a crucial partner with Jesus. Jesus was miraculously conceived in a young virgin woman by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit descended on Jesus like a dove at His baptism. Jesus was led into the wilderness for testing by the Spirit. That same Holy Spirit gave Jesus joy (Luke 10:21), power to drive out evil spirits (Matthew 12:28), and empowered an amazing teaching ministry (Luke 4:14).

However, the most astounding job of the Holy Spirit was communicated by Jesus the night before He died:

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

- JOHN 14:16-17

The Greek word that is translated “advocate” in verse 16 is *paracletos*. The English language does not have an adequate one-word translation for this, which is why various translations translate it differently: comforter, counselor, helper, encourager, intercessor, companion, and advocate. The literal meaning of *paracletos* is “one sent to help” and came out of the legal arena. A *paracletos* could be a legal aid or even a witness on your behalf. Eventually this term developed a broader meaning to include anyone who was sent to help you do anything you couldn’t do on your own. In the context of this passage, Jesus is essentially saying, “Just as I have been your *paracletos* for the last three years, helping you to believe, do, and say what God wants, now, as I physically leave you, the Father is going to send another.” To the disciples, hearing Jesus was leaving could not have been good news. After being guided, taught, protected and comforted by Jesus, who could possibly replace Him? But then Jesus makes another remarkable claim:

But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you...I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth.

- JOHN 16:7, 12-13

From this teaching, we learn the Holy Spirit will not only be with the disciples, but actually dwell inside them. He will guide them both in the understanding of truth and in its implementation. The New Testament teaches that all believers receive the Holy Spirit when they accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior. “*For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink*” (1 Corinthians 12:13). The Holy Spirit is given as a gift to all who believe in Christ and follow Him.

Because the Holy Spirit is God, He has all the attributes of divinity: He is eternal (Hebrews 9:14), everywhere (Psalm 139:7-10), all-knowing (Isaiah 40:13; 1 Corinthians 2:10, 11), and all-powerful (Psalm 104:30). While He is every bit as much God as the Father and Son, He is distinct (Matthew 12:31-32; John 14:16, 16:5-15). The Holy Spirit is a person, not an impersonal force. Jesus speaks of Him as a “He,” not an “it.”

We also learn that once the Holy Spirit dwells within us, He will never leave. “*And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption*” (Ephesians 4:30). This is a significant verse about the security we are promised. Even if we do something to grieve the Holy Spirit, He will not leave us because He has been sealed into our soul.

God gives us new life through His Spirit:

And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

- ROMANS 8:11

The Holy Spirit gives you wisdom and helps you think as God thinks.

The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except that person's own spirit within? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.

- 1 CORINTHIANS 2:10-12

The Holy Spirit gives you supernatural strength.

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being...

- EPHESIANS 3:16

The Holy Spirit gives you godly virtues.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

- GALATIANS 5:22-23

The Holy Spirit gives you certain talents and gifts beyond your natural abilities to carry out God's purpose.

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

- 1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-7

There is much more to say about the Holy Spirit, but ultimately it comes down to a decision you can make when it comes to His work in your life. Open your heart and let Him fill you.

DAY 4

THE PURPOSE OF PRAYER

If the primary purpose of the Bible is for God to speak to us, then many people assume that the primary purpose of prayer is for us to speak to God. While it's true that prayer is a way for us to speak to God, it actually has a much more profound purpose.

When we genuinely pray, we go into the presence of God. However, since God is omnipresent aren't we always in God's presence? Yes and no. While God may be everywhere, there is no certainty you are engaging Him. It is possible to have dinner with your spouse, and because you are distracted, never enter into his or her presence. We can do that with God.

When you pray in earnest, you come face-to-face with the God of the universe, the God who shows you grace, the God who adopts you, the God who guides and strengthens you. When you pray, you step into God's kingdom, His world – the place where God rules without push back.

When I pray, it may seem that I am narrowing my world, retreating from the real world into a prayer closet in Jesus' metaphor. Actually I am entering another world, just as real but invisible, a world that has power to change both me and the world I seem to be retreating from.

- PHILIP YANCEY; PRAYER, DOES IT MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Suppose you could score an invitation to spend time with anyone in the world: the president, your favorite actor or athlete, an expert in your field, etc. How exciting would that be? We have actually been given a personal invitation by the sovereign, merciful, creator God to visit with Him whenever we want. *"Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need"* (Hebrews 4:16).

The most amazing thing about prayer is we are communicating directly to the Lord Almighty, who is the final authority over everything. We don't need to go through a priest or any other person, memorize a chant, or follow any tradition or ritual. We just need to talk and listen. We don't even have to talk out loud because God is omniscient, or all-knowing. He knows our thoughts. He has allowed us to walk into His presence whenever we want. This was made possible through the death of Jesus, when we were reconciled back to God and can now enjoy an intimate relationship with Him.

This give and take of prayer (speaking and listening) was modeled by Jesus during His three-year ministry. First, we see Jesus speaking to God throughout His ministry.

He talks to Him when He heals, before He eats, while doing ministry, during miracles, while He is alone, when He is in a crowd and so on. In our reading tomorrow, we will look more in depth at speaking to God.

But Jesus didn't only talk to the Father, He also listened. For instance, when it came time for Him to choose the twelve men who would be His disciples, He spent the whole night in prayer (Luke 6:12-16). Only after talking and listening to His Father's wishes was He ready to make His choice. In the Garden of Gethsemane, the night before Jesus was killed, He prayed for God the Father to change the plan for the next day, and even though the plan remained the same, Jesus found strength in listening to His Father. Prayer is not just talking to God; it is giving space for Him to communicate back to us.

Listening to God can be a bit mysterious. God doesn't need to speak out loud to get through to us. He can communicate straight into our minds. When God speaks to us, it is usually when we have slowed down enough to empty our minds of our agendas and things that distract us. Sometimes He speaks to us in the midst of activity – walking, jogging, gardening, hiking, etc. Regardless of what we are doing, if we sift out the noise of our lives, we can make room for His voice. But how can we be sure it is God speaking? We can know because thoughts will come into our minds that we know didn't come from us. They will be consistent with His Word and what He wants for us. Perhaps it is a prompting to do something or a new perspective on a problem, or an answer to a question. God will make it known. Though He is mysterious, He also wants us to hear Him clearly.

As we spend time in His presence talking to Him, listening to Him, reading His Word and meditating on His principles, eventually we will grow to a place in our relationship with God that we recognize and understand what He is saying to us. Like John 10:3-4 says, *"The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep recognize his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice."* Recognition comes from familiarity and familiarity comes from time spent together.

There is no one right formula for always hearing God. There will be times where the communication seems more difficult, when it is harder to hear God's voice. But it is good to remember that God wants to hear from us and for us to hear Him. In those moments when it seems God is silent, know that He is always there, always listening, always working, always involved.

DAY 5

CONNECTING WITH GOD IN A MEANINGFUL WAY

There is certainly no one right way to connect with God. God speaks to us in a variety of ways, as we saw in Day Two of this week. There are also many ways we can talk to Him (out loud, in our minds, on paper, formally, informally, etc.). At one point the disciples asked Jesus about how to pray. Undoubtedly they saw in Jesus a vibrant and powerful way of connecting with God and wanted to learn from Him. Instead of saying to them, “You’ll need to figure this out on your own,” He was quick to give them a prayer model.

*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.*

And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

- Matthew 6:9-13

Jesus didn’t give them this prayer so they would see it as the only prayer, or to pray it mindlessly it over and over again. He just wanted to model some key ingredients in speaking effectively to God. For instance, we can see in this prayer intimacy with God (calling Him “Father”), reverence (acknowledging God as hallowed or holy) and boldness (asking).

As we conclude this week, we’ll discuss some practical, specific ways to connect with Him in a meaningful way. These techniques are in no way meant to limit how you read the Bible or pray, but just to give you some helpful tools to move forward spiritually.

BIBLE READING

We have already seen how important it is to grow in Bible knowledge and application. Here are some steps to move forward. The first step is to get a Bible you can understand. Translations have come a long way since the King James Version written in 1611. Four hundred years later, translations are more accurate and easier to understand. The version used in this workbook is the New International Version, 2011.

A Bible with study notes is extremely helpful. They serve as a running commentary on the biblical text. Another idea is to access youversion.com on your mobile device. You can choose the translation that works best for you and it’s with you all the time. Second, you need some kind of Bible reading plan. Because the Bible isn’t really one

continuous book but 66 books, you don't have to necessarily start at the beginning of Genesis and read through to Revelation. You can choose any of the books of the Bible to dive into. If you have not done much Bible reading you might want to start in the New Testament with Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John.

Third, don't just read. Read to understand. Have you ever been reading, and when you got to the end of the chapter you realized your mind was on cruise control and you didn't really catch any of it? One way to read more actively is with a journal or an empty note pad. Write the chapter or passage you're reading at the top of the page (i.e. John 8 or Philippians 4:1-10) and then write these three questions across the top of the page:

- What does it say? (Paraphrase it using your own words.)
- What does it mean? (How does this impact you today?)
- What am I going to do? (What specific application will you make today?)

You certainly don't have to write volumes under each question, but you might be surprised at how much you get out of your Bible reading by doing this simple exercise.

PRAYER

Again, prayer is so personal it's impossible to dictate a one-size-fits-all technique, but some guidance might be helpful. We learn from Jesus' prayer life three important things: He prayed privately, He prayed regularly, He prayed genuinely.

1. PRAY PRIVATELY

Jesus often was seen going out by Himself to pray. Luke 9:18 says, *"One day Jesus left the crowds to pray alone."* And again, in Mark 1:35 we read, *"Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray."* Jesus knew that any good relationship needs times of uninterrupted one-on-one conversation. There is a depth of conversation that is not possible when you are interacting with God on the fly. Setting a certain time, a certain place, and even a certain pattern to pray (we will look at one in a moment) can be very helpful when you are having a private conversation with God.

2. PRAY REGULARLY

We see Jesus praying as a regular part of His day. It was such a normal part of His life that prayer bubbled out of Him all the time. Ephesians 6:18, says, *"Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere."* During our day we should practice talking to God silently in our hearts about the different situations we are facing at any given time. Remember, prayer is an aspect of a vibrant loving relationship, not a ritual. No happily married person ever says, "I talked to my spouse for 10 minutes this morning so I don't have to talk to her again until tomorrow morning."

3. PRAY GENUINELY

Just as we should never try to impress others with our prayers, Jesus taught we should not try to impress God either.

And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others...But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.

- **MATTHEW 6:5-7**

God wants to hear prayers that come from our hearts. He wants us to be genuine. In fact, God would much rather have you pray authentically even if you are angry with Him (and maybe don't use courteous language) than hear flowery prayers that aren't a true expression of how you feel.

Finally, a way to connect with God during your private sessions of prayer is journaling while praying. It might help you slow down and avoid getting off track. There are different acrostics people have used through the years to help walk them through their prayers. Here is one that might be helpful: P-R-A-Y.

PRAISE

God is praised over 350 times in the Bible. To praise Him is to acknowledge how great He is and to thank Him for the great things He has done. King David in the Old Testament was a master at praising God. Here is just one of his psalms that contain praise: *"I will give thanks to you, LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds. I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing the praises of your name, O Most High"* (Psalm 9:1-2).

Notice that he first gave thanks for all the wonderful deeds God has done. Every time we talk to God, we should easily be able to find something to thank Him for. We thank Him for His goodness, His power, His mercy, His wisdom and the many other aspects of who He is.

REPENT

To repent is to confess specific sins we have committed and to turn away from doing them again ("repent" literally means to turn around). It is important to agree with God's assessment of us that we have sinned and fallen short of His standard. If we don't own this reality and humble ourselves, we will never fully be able to engage with Him. *"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from*

all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:8-9). Coming clean before God is an important part of genuine prayer and reaffirms the truth that God forgives us and we don't need to carry guilt.

ASK

God encourages us to ask for the things that are on our mind. Here's what Jesus tells us in the Sermon on the Mount, *"Ask and it will be given to you...for everyone who asks receives...Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"* (Matthew 7:7-11).

Here Jesus teaches us to ask, but also to understand that our Father in heaven reserves the right to answer according to His wisdom and love for us.

YIELD

To yield means to be quiet after you have spoken to God and to listen to what He might want to say to you. If you regularly take time to listen, you will begin to hear God's voice. Use a journal to write down the thoughts and promptings that come to mind. Keeping record of what God says to you is a great way to build your faith. When you are able to look back and see what God said, how you obeyed, and how God answered, your trust and faith grow.



DAILY RESPONSE

What excites you and what seems daunting as you think about establishing a regular time to read the Bible and pray?

What book of the Bible do you want to read/study first?

Write out your prayer today using the P-R-A-Y method. Make sure you give enough time at the end to sit quietly and listen to God.

SAMPLE

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.

- ISAIAH 65:24

The Church of Scotland defines prayer this way: “Prayer is an offering of our desires unto God for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins and thankful acknowledgment of His mercies.” This summarizes well the components of prayer. Our hearts should be set right before praying and our desires within God’s will in all things we bring to Him.

PREPARING FOR YOUR PRAYER TIME

Review your notes from group time about how people have experienced hearing from God. This can help guide you, especially if you are new to prayer and hearing God speak directly to you.

Review your journal for areas in your own life that you will want to incorporate into your prayer time.

Come to the prayer time unencumbered, without your to-do lists or thoughts of what you have scheduled next. Don’t bring a mobile device or other distractions.

Consider fasting prior to your prayer time.

NOTES ON FASTING

In order to make the most of your prayer experience with your Rooted group, we recommend that you spend time preparing to hear from God. One of the disciplines that helps with this is fasting. Fasting is a way we eliminate the noise and distractions of the world around us and focus more completely on hearing God’s voice. While we fast, we are reminded and we become more aware of our dependence on God. By fasting, we intensify our prayers, place ourselves in a position of submission, and become more sensitive to hearing God’s voice.

GROUP PRAYER TIME (30 MINUTES)

Begin with a devotional or read Scripture (Psalms 8, 19, 34, 121 and/or 138 are great options) to prepare your heart and mind for time in prayer.

Move into a space where you will not be interrupted.

Talk about what prayer is, why it’s an important discipline, and what your hopes are for this experience.

INDIVIDUAL PRAYER TIME (45 – 60 MINUTES)

Begin praying. Take time to listen to what God wants to say to you.

You can use the following example of prayer structure and content. Remember prayer is a personal discipline. This is only an example of one way to pray. Write down any thoughts that come to mind so you can refer back and see how God answered your prayers.

PRAISE / THANKSGIVING / WORSHIP

CONFESSION

ASK:

Family, friends, specific needs from your journal

For your Rooted group requests

For your church and the Church in the world, to accomplish
His will on earth as it is in Heaven

For your purpose

For those with whom God wants you to tell your story

Our community

Our nation and leaders

The world and world leaders

What God wants your group to do, where you should serve

People in whom God wants you to invest

In all things, pray that you are within His will

DEBRIEF AND CELEBRATION (1 HOUR)

After your prayer time, take time to share a meal together to break your fast. Share how you heard God's voice, what this focused prayer time meant to you, and how it affected you. Share how the fasting time prepared you and whether your prayer time felt more intense from this discipline. Share any other relevant feelings or revelations from God during this time in fasting and prayer and if it is something you want to continue to add to your life on a more regular basis.

SAMPLE



ROOTED

A 10-WEEK DISCIPLESHIP
EXPERIENCE

SAMPLE
FACILITATOR
GUIDE

* HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The purpose of this guide is to provide you with the information necessary to successfully facilitate a *Rooted* group. This book includes the definition and goals of *Rooted*, facilitator roles and responsibilities, tips for leading a group, as well as weekly guidelines for your group time and outside communication. Also included are additional resources, suggested outlines for experiences and the forms needed for the completion of the *Rooted* journey.

FACILITATOR GUIDE

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Tips for Leading a Rooted Group

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WEEK 2: Who is God?

WEEK 3: How does God speak to us?

WEEK 4: Where is God in the Midst of Suffering?

WEEK 5: There is an Enemy

WEEK 6: How can I make the most of my life? (Part 1)

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WEEK 9: Why and how should I tell others?

WEEK 10: Why is the Church important?

Appendix

WEEK 3

HOW DOES GOD SPEAK TO US?

OBJECTIVE: Create a safe environment where people can discuss whether or not they have heard God speak to them and explore their desires to know Him better. Use this discussion to logically transition to the prayer experience, which should be intimate, relational, and transformational. Through the experience, people will be drawn together into a bond that is strong and deep.

PRAYER POINTS

There would be openness in your group to share and be honest about what stumbling blocks they have experienced with prayer in the past.

They would understand God's great desire to have a personal and intimate relationship with them through His Word and prayer.

People in your group will make time for the prayer experience and would hear from God in an intimate and personal way.

LEADER PREPARATION

Take time to prepare your heart before you arrive, praying for your group time and each person in your group.

Watch for "over talkers" and those that make community unsafe for the rest of the group. Redirect them.

Pray that God would show you who He wants to be future Life Group leaders and Rooted leaders. Begin giving them responsibilities for the group to develop them as leaders.

If you are leading a mixed gender group by yourself, pray for God to raise up a member of the opposite sex who will be able to pray for people during strongholds and any other appropriate times.

Listen to what is said and what is not said as your group shares so you can ask great questions. Lead with the end in mind!

As you prepare for your group, see the appendix for more reading about the Holy Spirit.

GROUP TIME

10 minutes - Welcome

Continue to use name tags to help everyone learn names.

Appoint a future leader to help you welcome the group as they arrive.

20 MINUTES - ICE BREAKER

Create a safe way to help people get to know each other (one minute per person)

Play Peaks and Pits. Have everyone share the best and worst part of their day

Play the Penny Game. Bring 20 pennies dated in the last 25 years have everyone pick one and share something happened in their life in that year

Play "Two Truths and a Lie." Each person makes three statements about him or herself and one isn't true. The group guesses which one is false.

20 MINUTES - INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

Whom do you recognize on the phone before they say their name?

What makes them so recognizable for you?

What do you love/hate about caller I.D.? Do you use it to screen your calls?

What do you think the face of God looks like?

Have two people share their two-minute story of how they came to Christ and how their lives are different now that they are walking with Jesus.

40 MINUTES - DISCUSSION

The main message this week is that God speaks to us and wants a personal relationship with us.

As you transition out of the opening questions, you can segue to this week's topics: talking to God (prayer) and hearing from God as He speaks into our lives.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

What challenges you as we talk about prayer and hearing from God?

Has anyone in the group ever questioned the authenticity of the Bible?
What did you find out?

How important is the Bible to you?

What are different ways people hear from God? How do you hear from Him when you pray?

Did this week's homework make you think of prayer differently? If so, how?

You can ask a question about the homework. "Which day did you like the best?" "Which day challenged you the most?" (Homework questions are listed on the following page).

You can pick one or two questions they answered in homework and use it as a basis for discussion.

LEADER NOTES: Remember that throughout this discussion and those that follow, everyone will not agree. In fact, create room for people to disagree. Everyone is on his or her own journey. Bring in truth by redirecting questions to others in the group. Don't teach – lead.

Remember to take notes when each person shares part of their story, writing down things they question or may not believe, and breakthroughs in their spiritual journey. You will use all of these notes when you pray for them to break free of strongholds and during the celebration.

20 MINUTES - PRAYER REQUESTS

Prayer requests can be done as a group or you can break into prayer partners.

Remind everyone of the importance of confidentiality.

Pray about the future of the group and why God brought you all together. Pray that people in the group would find their purpose individually and collectively.

10 MINUTES - CLOSING

Ensure you have a set time and location for your prayer experience and everyone has the specifics on their calendars and has arranged for child care if needed. 100% participation is the goal.

If your group has decided to fast as part of your experience, review your goals for fasting and your plan for breaking your fast.

Update status of social media/email group.

WORKBOOK REVIEW

HOW DOES GOD SPEAK TO US?

The focus this week is that God speaks in many ways. We learn about the Holy Spirit, prayer, and listening to God.

DAY 1 THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

What is the biggest challenge you have to reading or studying God's Word?

How about believing or following God's Word?

DAY 2 GOD SPEAKS

Does any of what you've read today surprise you? Why?

Do you feel like God speaks to people as clearly today as He did in biblical times?

How has God spoken to you?

Do you really want to hear what God wants to say to you?

DAY 3 OUR DIVINE HELPER

What was your understanding and your relationship with the Holy Spirit up to this point?

What is it now?

How can you keep in step with the Holy Spirit?

DAY 4 THE PURPOSE OF PRAYER

What new thoughts do you have about prayer?

What is more challenging for you: to speak to God or to listen to God? Why?

DAY 5 CONNECTING WITH GOD IN A MEANINGFUL WAY

What excites you and what seems daunting as you think about establishing a regular time to read the Bible and pray?

What book of the Bible do you want to read/study first?

LEADING A SUCCESSFUL PRAYER EXPERIENCE

PREPARING FOR THE PRAYER EXPERIENCE

Pray for your group as a whole and for each individual, for what it is God plans to do as they meet with Him in the first Rooted experience.

A sample prayer: “Lord, I pray that those who have never heard your voice would recognize it in this experience. That through Your Spirit, You will reveal Yourself to the non-believers in a powerful way so they would see and know that You are the One True Living God who knows them and loves them. For those in the group who know your voice, my prayer is that You will meet them and give them what they need from Your abundance and grace.”

Choose a location for your prayer experience. Some places to consider are a group member’s home, at church, in the chapel, at the beach, or a quiet park. Feel free to create a welcoming and inviting environment for the Prayer Experience. Use music, candles, or whatever you feel would enhance a peaceful atmosphere.

Review the prayer experience card, included here and in your *Rooted* workbook, for guidelines of timing of prayer.

This is a great week to have group members pray for an opportunity to share their faith. God may open doors to spiritual conversations before Week 9.

As you lead your group in prayer, pray through your church’s mission statement and how God might use your group to fulfill that mission. You can refer back to this in your *Rooted* group and your Life Group.

You can use the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6:9-14 as a guide for your time:

MATTHEW 6:9 - Worship, thanksgiving

MATTHEW 6:10 - God’s Kingdom to come, justice, mercy, righteousness and peace on earth

MATTHEW 6:11 - Our needs

MATTHEW 6:12 - Confession and forgiveness

MATTHEW 6:13 - Protection

THINGS TO CONSIDER

There will be many people in your group who have never prayed for 45 minutes, so help them understand how it will work and encourage them that the time will go by very quickly. You may be asked why the prayer experience is so long. The reason is that it usually takes a while to quiet our hearts and focus on the Lord and what He wants to say to us. In fact, some groups have wanted it to be longer and have taken a half day to pray. Use your judgment to determine the length of time.

There may be people in your group who have never prayed before or who have never prayed out loud before. Be understanding of this as you lead them. Some people may not want to “lean in” to this experience. The thought of praying for an extended period of time may be intimidating to them. As their leader, be encouraging. Help them to understand that though this may be a challenge for them, God is working in and through their prayers.

You may have people in your group who don't have a personal relationship with Jesus. Invite them to explore who God is and how He talks with us. Encourage them to participate in this experience by asking Him to reveal Himself.

See appendix for additional notes on the Prayer Experience.

FASTING (OPTIONAL)

Depending on your group, you may want to challenge them to fast as a group before your prayer experience and then celebrate the completion of your experience with a meal together. If you are meeting in the afternoon, you could begin your fast after your evening meal the night before, and through breakfast and lunch the next day. Should your group not be ready for this, you as a leader could fast and/or ask a few of your more spiritually mature group members to join you.

See appendix for additional notes on fasting.

DEBRIEFING TIME (BREAKING FAST TOGETHER)

Be sure to make time for debrief. Listen for how God moved in this prayer experience. Take notes as your group discusses what they experienced as they took the extended time to pray and listen for God's voice. What did they hear? How did they feel? Did the time go quickly? What was unique about this time when they prayed versus other times they've prayed?

BLESS CARD

This is a familiar acronym groups can use to prepare for the prayer experience. It is a great way to prepare their hearts before sharing their faith stories in Week 9. Encourage them to think of specific people in their lives who they can begin praying for now.

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.

- **ISAIAH 65:24**

The Church of Scotland defines prayer this way: “Prayer is an offering of our desires unto God for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins and thankful acknowledgment of His mercies.” This summarizes well the components of prayer. Our hearts should be set right before praying and our desires within God’s will in all things we bring to Him.

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Review your notes from group time of how people have experienced hearing from God. This can help guide you, especially if you are new to prayer and hearing God speak directly to you.

Review your journal for areas in your own life that you will want to incorporate into your prayer time.

Come to the prayer time unencumbered, without your to-do lists or thoughts of what is scheduled next. Don’t bring a mobile device or other distractions.

Consider fasting prior to your prayer time.

NOTES ON FASTING:

In order to make the most of your prayer and fasting time with your Rooted group, we recommend that you spend time preparing to hear from God. One of the disciplines that helps with this is fasting. Fasting is a way we eliminate the noise and distractions of the world around us and focus more completely on hearing God’s voice. While we fast, we are reminded and we become more aware of our dependence on God. By fasting, we intensify our prayers, place ourselves in a position of submission and become more sensitive to hearing God’s voice.

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Move into a space where you will not be interrupted.

Talk about what prayer is, why it's an important discipline, and what your hopes are for this experience.

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You can use the following example of prayer structure and content. Remember prayer is a personal discipline. This is only an example of one way to pray. Write down any thoughts that come to mind so you can refer back and see how God answered your prayers.

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What God wants your group to do, where you should serve

People in whom God wants you to invest

In all things, pray that you are within His will

DEBRIEF AND CELEBRATION (60 MINUTES)

After your prayer time, take time to share a meal together to break your fast. Share how you heard God's voice, what this focused prayer time meant to you, and how it affected you. Share how the fasting time prepared you and whether your prayer time felt more intense from this discipline. Share any other relevant feelings or revelations from God during this time in fasting and prayer and if it is something you want to continue to add to your life on a more regular basis.

SAMPLE

NAMES AND THE CHARACTER OF GOD

ABBA	Romans 8:15	LOVE	1 John 4:8
COMFORTER	Isaiah 66:13	MERCIFUL	Ephesians 2:4
COUNSELOR	Isaiah 28:29	MIGHTY	Luke 1:49
CREATOR	Genesis 1:1	MIRACLE WORKER	Matt. 19:26
DELIVERER	Psalms 91:3	NEVER CHANGES	James 1:17
FAITHFUL	Lam. 3:23	NEVER WEARY	Isaiah 40:28
FORGIVING	Num. 14:18	PEACEMAKER	Proverbs 16:7
FORTRESS	Psalms 91:2	PHYSICIAN	Psalms 103:3
GENTLE	Isaiah 40:11	POWERFUL	Psalms 66:7
GOOD	Psalms 145:7	REDEEMER	Isaiah 54:5
GUIDE	Psalms 48:18	REFINER	Malachi 3:3
HEALER	Exodus 15:26	REFUGE	Psalms 46:1
HOLY	Leviticus 19:2	RESCUER	Daniel 6:27
HUSBAND	Isaiah 54:4	ROCK	2 Sam 22:32
JEALOUS	Exodus 34:14	SHEPHERD	Psalms 23
JUST	Isaiah 45:21	STEADFAST	Daniel 6:26
LIGHT	Psalms 27:1	STRONG	Psalms 89:8
LIVING WATER	Jeremiah 2:13	TEACHER	Psalms 119
LONGSUFFERING	Num. 14:18	TRUSTWORTHY	Psalms 144:2

NAMES OF GOD, TRANSLATED FROM HEBREW

HEBREW	TRANSLATION
EL ELYON	The God Most High
ELOHIM	The Creator
JEHOVAH-NISSI	The Lord my Banner
QANNI	Jealous
JEHOVAH-SHALOM	The Lord is Peace
JEHOVAH-SABOATH	The Lord of Hosts
EL SHADDAI	The All Sufficient One
ADONAI	LORD, Master
YAHWEH	LORD (Jehovah)
EL OLAM	The God Who Sees
JEHOVAH-MEKODDISHKEM	The Lords Who Sanctifies You
JEHOVAH-JIREH	The Lord Will Provide
JEHOVAH-RAAH	The Lord is my Shepherd
JEHOVAH-RAPHA	The Lord Who Heals
JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH	The Lord is There
JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU	The Lord our Righteousness



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