
Week Four:

Invited to Dance

with the Divine

“You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in You,
whose thoughts are fixed on You!”

- Isaiah 26:3 (NLT)

Discovering the Father's Heart

Day One: In My Father's Lap

Make your whole self available to God. Rest quietly now, reflectively. *As you reflect on yesterday's events, what made an impact on you? Name here any thoughts, questions, or feelings that linger.*



Ask God where He may be moving in these things and include that reflection here.

What does your heart desire for God to do for you in these unfinished situations?

Lay all these things at His feet... quiet your mind... trust Him... *Ask Him to let you see His activity and recognize His movement. Open your Bible and read Isaiah 1:2-3 slowly. Stop anywhere you find yourself struck by something you've read. Record your thoughts here:*



Now read it in this translation (NLT) and insert your name into the blanks. Spend time with it; listen to what is going on inside of you.

(vs. 2) "The children I raised and cared for..." "[_____ who] I raised and cared for..." Have you ever stopped to think that God raised you and cared for you even while you were a very young girl? He was there for your first steps. He was there the first time you fell off your bike. He was there when your adolescent body gave evidence that you were becoming a woman. He was there for every moment of triumph and every moment of heartache. **He was always there. He is still there, with you right now, where you sit. He has never missed one single moment of your life. What happens within you as you ponder these insights?**



Psalm 139:16-17 says, "You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in Your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed. How precious are Your thoughts about me, O God! They are innumerable!" (NLT) In a way, God has kept a journal about your life; only He knew about every single circumstance before it ever took place. There are no accidents, no surprises, and no unexpected occurrences. God is omniscient, which means that He knows everything. He knew everything that would happen to you and prepared for it in advance! This does not mean, however, that you did not have to make your own choices. The study of God's Word from Genesis to Revelation gives solid evidence that people are held accountable for their choices. **You are responsible for your choices, but God has planned in accordance with them.** Don't you see, knowing everything that would happen to

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you and exactly how you would respond, **God designed a path that would still work it all out for good if you would just cooperate with Him.** Your life is immeasurably important to Him. You are not just a blip on God's radar screen; you are His daughter! You can live in the joy of your privilege as God's daughter. You will become more confident in God's love for you the more you walk, interact and cooperate with Him. **What are your thoughts about this?**

Now, let us get back to Isaiah 1:3. **"Even the animals know their owner and appreciate his care, but not My people.... No matter what I do for them, they still do not understand."** (NLT) You may not have seen your Father signing the checks for all the financial provision you have received, and you may not have seen His hand extended in every single blessing you have enjoyed, but every bit of it comes from Him.



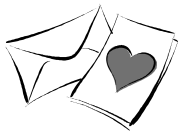
James 1:17 says, **"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."** (NIV) In week two, day four, we looked at Psalm 139: 1-5 and considered how everything that comes into our life must first pass through God to reach us. His presence is with us and follows us! I try to live in a continual state of awareness and gratitude that every single good thing that comes to me comes from my God. **Every thing!** I thank Him for all sorts of things that someone else might dismiss as ridiculously petty. I know this- **that there is nothing that I have or that I am that my God did not make available to me. Nothing.** I can't even understand what I do, unless God reveals it to me. I am only a steward of my life. The only parts that I can clearly call my own are my choices. I have been given the power to choose and those choices define my life. At this point in my journey with Him, choosing God every day almost feels self-serving. How? **I am just bright enough to realize that choosing anything other than God's way will harm me and I don't want that to happen! I want to know the sweetness of His presence more than I want to have my own way.** This does not mean that I am perfect. We will never come to a completely sinless state of being as long as we walk this earth. I can avoid willful sins, however, so if I know that something is contrary to His will for me then I do not want to do it. **I want Him.** So I choose Him over and over and over again. Why? It has proven to be the greatest life I could imagine. **Will you ask God to increase your level of understanding about just how much He is doing for you in your life? Listen to God's voice and respond. Write your prayer here:**



Some key phrases from Isaiah 1:4-6 include: **"They are loaded down with a burden of guilt... They have turned away from the Lord, cutting themselves off from His help. Your head is injured, and your heart is sick. You are sick from head to foot—covered with bruises, welts, and infected wounds — without any ointments or bandages."** (NLT) Although this passage also references punishment, **our punishment has been fully accomplished** through Jesus' crucifixion and death. Thankfully, we never need to fear God's punishment again. We do, however, need to be aware of God's discipline. Discipline is a method of teaching, thus, you will see the root word "disciple" in the word. While our punishment (what we deserve for our sin) has been finished, our discipline will continue based upon the decisions that we choose to make. When we choose ways that are not God's ways, we step out from under the protection His precepts and principles provide and will instead find ourselves being tutored (disciplined) by God. He often allows the natural consequences of poor choices to have their painful effect to get our attention. Hebrews 12:10 says, **"...but God disciplines us for our good that we may share in His holiness."** (NIV) **God's discipline process for the willing heart is far more like surgical**

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treatment than our idea of discipline. God's work is very medicinal in nature when we are willing participants. God, the Great Physician, opens up old wounds to the very core of who we are. There, He exposes the infection and applies healing medicine where it is needed. God's work is never just surface level, never just a topical ointment. God does not treat symptoms; your God treats the source of the disease. If you have sustained substantial breaks in your heart or mind, He will often allow a fresh breaking so that He can properly set those old broken places. ***Life and energy will then flow into places of your life that have been weak and diseased.*** This applies both to sins you've committed against yourself and sins that others have committed against you. ***What part of this resonates most strongly with you right now?***



Hear from your Father again in the same chapter of **Isaiah 1:18-20**. *"Come now, let us argue this out," says the Lord. "No matter how deep the stain of your sins, I can remove it. I can make you as clean as freshly fallen snow. Even if you are stained as red as crimson, I can make you as white as wool. If you will only obey Me and let Me help you, then you will have plenty to eat."* (NLT)

No matter how deep the stain, I can remove it, says your God. Nothing has the power to define who you are except your Father. "If only..." He whispers. "If only you will let Me help you..." **What do you feel has defined you up until now?** _____

Name the stain here that still haunts you and then write a prayer asking Him to help you grow in your trust that you can be freed from the blight of that stain. _____

Think about how God defines you. How do you need to respond to His truth and cooperate with Him? _____

With what new hope or insight do you close today's study? Write it here as God's special gift to you and keep this thought before you.



God's special gift to me: _____

This week's theme: I am _____
(invited to dance with the Divine)



Take-Away: My God has raised me and cared for me since I was born. I will trust Him and allow Him to help me.

Day Two: At the Teacher's Feet

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Make your whole self available to God. Rest quietly now, reflectively. *As you reflect on yesterday's events, what made an impact on you? Name here any thoughts, questions, or feelings that linger.*



Ask God where He may be moving in these things and include that reflection here.

What does your heart desire for God to do for you in these unfinished situations?

Lay all these things at His feet... quiet your mind... trust Him... **Ask Him to let you see His activity and recognize His movement.** As you reflect on this story, listen to it from God's perspective. Listen as if He is right there telling you the story face-to-face and listen as if you are hearing it for the very first time. **Please read Genesis 9:18-29.**



Consider the individuals in the story. How would each one tell their story? What challenges did they face and what feelings?

Ham might say,

Shem & Japheth:

Noah might say,

Ham's
descendents:

Now specifically consider Canaan, son of Ham, and Canaan's descendents (vs. 25). **What do you feel as you think about innocent people being forever cursed because of a predecessor's choice?**

From
important

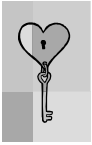


God's point of view: **Why do you suppose God included this story as for us to know?**

Considering God's perspective, how might this event have impacted Him and what He desired?

As you consider this story as a significant moment in God's own life, what captures your heart?

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Now consider your own life. *Are you facing any of the same challenges or feelings you recognized in the participants?*

Have you recently been disrespected, exposed, cast out, or something similar?

Has God brought any measure of healing to those places? If so, in what way?

Glance at Exodus 3:8. The land that became Canaan's was an exceedingly fertile land and it became the land of promise for God's people, the descendents of Abraham. God did not leave this people to languish with nothing. God somehow transformed a land of exile into a land of promised blessing and fulfillment of God's desire for them. *Is there any area of your life that feels irredeemably cursed?*

Write a prayer here asking God to transform it into a land of promise, blessing and abundance.

Are you able to offer Him even a mustard seed's worth of faith that He will transform it?

Comfort your heart with God's Word. Please read Isaiah 55:11-13 (NLT).

"It is the same with My word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it. You will live in joy and peace. The mountains and hills will burst into song, and the trees of the field will clap their hands! Where once there were thorns, cypress trees will grow. Where briers grew, myrtles will sprout up. This miracle will bring great honor to the Lord's name; it will be an everlasting sign of His power and love." *Stretch your heart just a little now. How do you need to respond to and cooperate with God?*

With what new hope or insight do you close today's study? Write it here as God's special gift to you and keep this thought before you.



God's special gift to me: _____

This week's theme: I am invited to _____



Take Away: *God desires to bring promise & blessing to even the seemingly "cursed" areas of my life.*

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Day Three: Just Between You and Me

Make your whole self available to God. Rest quietly now, reflectively. As you reflect on yesterday's events, what made an impact on you? Name here any thoughts, questions, or feelings that linger.



Ask God where He may be moving in these things and include that reflection here.

What does your heart desire for God to do for you in these unfinished situations?

Lay all these things at His feet... quiet your mind... trust Him... Ask Him to let you see His activity and recognize His movement. Now please read the following:



What does it mean to walk with God? What does this look like in the life of a believer? How do we learn how to walk with God? The path itself is as distinctive to each individual, as each individual's life is unique. However, we all share some common challenges and will need to learn many of the same lessons. There will be some important markers along the way; markers that we will explore together in this study.

Our journey will require a new way of thinking and relating to God. It will also require new patterns in your own inner processes as you relate to other people.

Can you stretch your imagination and consider a picture with me? Imagine a dance, the old-fashioned kind of dance. Perhaps you can imagine a couple dancing the respectful and graceful waltz. The dynamics between the couple as they dance is a pretty good description of how we learn to walk with God. As the music begins to play, the gentleman will offer the lady his hand. She will take it lightly and step into his embrace.

Your life with God begins in much the same fashion. God draws you to Himself through the musical pull of the Holy Spirit (see John 6:44). As the Spirit draws you, you recognize God's extended hand and respond to His offer to take you as His own through salvation. God has made this union possible through the death of His Son, Jesus Christ, whose blood thoroughly satisfied all the debt you owed God through your sinfulness. His blood forever satisfied God's wrath towards your sin and frees you to step into a beautiful intimacy with your God. **Your salvation did not just rescue you from an eternity in hell; it rescued you FOR a life of loving intimacy with your God.** You are given both! You must first recognize and confess your own sinfulness and your complete inability to save yourself. Then as you acknowledge your need for a true savior, you reach out and take His hand (His salvation). When you choose to believe (faith) that the offer is genuine, it then becomes substantial and lasting to you.

So you have finally reached out to take His hand, *now what?* **You actually move into God's realm when you step out onto the dance floor to experience a personal, unique, and cooperative,**

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one-on-one relationship with Him. Many of us have made a transaction with God, signed on the dotted line as it were, but then want to go on about our own business. Sometimes we treat our salvation as if it were a legal contract; a privilege to enjoy. We might even add it to our already busy life and determine to enjoy its benefits while only vaguely responding to its requirements. *Requirements? I thought you said salvation was free.*

The gift of salvation is free but the life that comes with it is accessible only through an intimate and cooperative relationship with God. Salvation is not simply an inheritance we receive and then spend it any way we choose; *it is an agreement to give your life to your Creator to do with as He pleases.* It is a matter of lordship, love, and a series of wise choices that we must make daily. Jesus did not say, *“Take this gift and then go on about your life as if you never really met Me.”* He said, *“Follow Me.”* **When we take up the new life that salvation offers, we have to leave behind the life we felt we were entitled to live.** To dance with the divine is to set down our own agenda and pick up Christ's agenda. It is to lay down our will, time and time again, by surrendering instead to God's will. Your gift of freedom with God costs you nothing but faith, **but it is by that very faith that you surrender life on your own terms.**

When you have settled the fact that you have made a lifetime commitment to the God of the Universe, you step out onto the dance floor, into God's arms and God's realm, **when you determine to let Him lead.** You do this by stepping back from the intense busyness of your life and purposely (with determined resolve) begin to live in an awareness of God's Presence. **You can know the God of the Universe!** Isn't that incredible? God will increasingly reveal Himself as you surrender more and more to His will. The longer you know Him and walk in submission to Him, the more God will reveal Himself to you. You will leave a life defined by our culture, a life without much meaning, to step into the greatest adventure of your life! Your God is deeply committed to showering you with His tender love and affection. **The more you experience God's love, the less hold other things will have over you.**

Many of us are living ordinary lives where we occasionally visit God in His spirit realm. We briefly leave our normal lives to visit with God at church or in Bible study before returning to what is most real to us. Yet for those of us who are willing to exchange our ordinary existence for an extraordinary one, we discover that our real life is out on the dance floor with our God. We can learn to live in the reality of His immediate presence!

You will begin to hear the music of His presence and feel the rhythmic beat of His heart as you spend time in God's Word every day. He will take you firmly by the hand and give you a few moments to take a deep breath. **The dancing begins when you follow His lead.** You accept God's leadership by laying down your own understanding at the feet of the One Who Knows Everything. He has infinite knowledge, wisdom, and experience that you cannot possess unless He shares it. You will be accepting that God knows all things and can see the answers when you cannot. You will be embracing your own limitations while celebrating His magnitude. As with any dance, there can be only one leader; the other partner must cooperate or what follows is a terrible mess. You are no longer in control, as you once felt you were. Perhaps soon, you will find yourself preferring to spin about breathlessly at times with the Divine rather than to miss the adventure altogether. Hopefully you will choose the extraordinary as your primary life and then learn to **have your ordinary life meet you on the dance floor,** in the midst of your dance with the Divine.

Even as you move into this new reality, a new understanding emerges. **You will discover that instead of God being an invited participant in your life, you are a chosen partner in His.** When you begin to open up the rooms of your heart to the Holy Spirit's expansive presence and begin to believe that God really wants you, messes and all – then you are moving out onto the dance floor with the God of the Universe. Eventually, you will begin to live in the music of His presence. You will look for God in everything, listen for God in everything, and respond to God in every way that you possibly can. Your

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life is no longer lived outside of His presence **but from the secure embrace of God's arms. There is truly no greater place to be in the entire world.**

What thoughts have you had as you read over this?

What area of your own heart and life resonates with what you've considered here?

With what new hope or insight do you close today's study? Write it here as God's special gift to you and keep this thought before you.



God's special gift to me: _____

This week's theme: _____



Take-Away: I can live my very ordinary moments from the very extraordinary embrace and presence of my God.

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Day Four: At the Teacher's Feet

Make your whole self available to God. Rest quietly now, reflectively. *As you reflect on yesterday's events, what made an impact on you? Name here any thoughts, questions, or feelings that linger.*



Ask God where He may be moving in these things and include that reflection here.

What does your heart desire for God to do for you in these unfinished situations?

Lay all these things at His feet... quiet your mind... trust Him... Ask Him to let you see His activity and recognize His movement. As you reflect on this story, listen to it from God's perspective. Listen as if He is right there telling you the story face-to-face and listen as if you are hearing it for the very first time. **Please read Genesis 11:1-9.**



Consider the people in the story. How might they tell their story?

How was all of civilization affected by this one event? How is your life impacted by this event?

What possible challenges and feelings did these people face?

From God's point of view: In what way was this significant in His life?



Considering God's perspective, how might this event have impacted Him and what He desired?

As you consider this story as a significant moment in God's own life, what captures your heart?

Now consider your own life. Are you facing any of the same challenges or feelings you recognized in the participants?



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When we read this biblical account, it may seem that God was harsh with mankind. Even though it may seem harsh, God was acting in love towards them. God cannot just leave us to our own devices, for the end result will not be good or God-honoring. Man's highest ingenuity did not bring them closer to their Creator, but it drove them farther away from Him. He was acting in love towards them by frustrating their efforts so that they could recognize again their dependence upon Him. **God is never working against us just to frustrate us. God is always working for us to bring us closer to Himself.**

"...So that we may make a name for ourselves." (vs. 4) Ouch. These words reverberate in my head. How often have I been distracted by "my name", meaning, what other people say or think about me? How often have I longed to attach myself to something so that I could have some kind of identity and praise associated with my name? How often have I tried to take matters into my own hands and "build" something for myself? Too often, I sadly say.

Are there any areas in which you might be trying to take matters into your own hands and "build" something for yourself?

Is there any area in your life that God might be frustrating right now because of your persistent (stubborn) attempts to control the matter?

Please read Isaiah 2:22: "Stop putting your trust in mere humans. They are as frail as breath. How can they be of help to anyone?" (NLT) **Is there a person to whom you've looked for help more than you've looked to God?**

Are you going to look to other people and take matters into your own hands? Will you rely on God to direct your affairs? These questions will be before you day in and day out in countless ways. You will likely apply more faith in Him in certain areas of your life long before you do in other areas. Still, as God brings these areas to your attention, you are responsible for how you respond. Remember, there is no such thing as *not responding*. **You are responding, even when you choose to look the other way or ignore God all together.**

Please read Isaiah 8:11-14a in the NLT: "The Lord has said to me in the strongest terms: 'Do not think like everyone else does. Do not be afraid that some plan conceived behind closed doors will be the end of you. Do not fear anything except the Lord Almighty. He alone is the Holy One. If you fear Him, you need fear nothing else. He will keep you safe.'" **Your thoughts?**

How is God asking you to respond to and cooperate with Him? _____

_____ **With**
what new hope or insight do you close today's study? Write it here as God's special gift to you and keep this thought before you.



God's special gift to me: _____

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This week's theme: _____



Take-Away: I don't have to take matters into my own hands. When I respect and trust my God I don't have to fear ANYTHING.

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Day Five: What He's Singing Over Me

Make your whole self available to God. Rest quietly now, reflectively. *As you reflect on yesterday's events, what made an impact on you? Name here any thoughts, questions, or feelings that linger.*



Ask God where He may be moving in these things and include that reflection here.

What does your heart desire for God to do for you in these unfinished situations?

Lay all these things at His feet... quiet your mind... trust Him... *Ask Him to let you see His activity and recognize His movement. Open your Bible and read Isaiah 26:3.*



So that we can gain a good picture of what biblical trust looks like, we're going to explore Isaiah 26:3 (NIV).

**"You will keep in perfect peace [her] whose mind is steadfast,
because [she] trusts in You."**

The original text is written in Hebrew, thus the Hebrew word for *keep* (natsar, Strong's 5341) means "**to faithfully guard**, watch over, preserve from danger." The Hebrew words we translate *perfect peace* are (shalom shalom 7965). They include the idea of "encouraging one who is fearful, **reassuring him that all is well.**" It is "a satisfied condition, a sense of well being; completeness, soundness, health, quiet, peaceful tranquility, entirety and wholeness". The word for *mind* (yetser, 3335) means "intellectual framework, imagination, desire, inclination, *plans and purposes formed in the mind.*" The word *steadfast* (camak 5564) means "**to lean against**, lay upon, rest upon, **be upheld and supported by what one rests upon.**" The word *trusts* (batach 982) means "to trust in, **to attach oneself**, to have confidence and confident expectation in, to feel safe and secure." Using the definitions that most speak to me, I could write it like this:

"You will faithfully guard and preserve from danger [her] whose mind, imagination, plans and purposes are laid upon, resting upon and supported by Thee: because [she] attaches [herself], trusts, makes [herself] secure in and has confident expectation in Thee."

Did you see that every primary word, except for mind, denotes some form of safety or security? In keep, **God is faithfully guarding**. In perfect peace **God is powerfully encouraging, reassuring, bringing completeness, soundness, health and wholeness**. In steadfast, it is **my job to lean upon, rest upon, and literally throw myself upon God for support**. Finally, in the word translated trusts, **I am to attach myself to Him, have confidence in Him and feel safe and secure in Him**.

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He does the first part as (or even after) I do the second part. Once again, the divine dance between human will and the Divine interact to create trust. Trust, however, is utterly dependent upon keeping our mind fixed upon God. ***Trust is no longer trust if it does not remain fixed on God.***

Let's define "trust" as "leaning into God."

Now please open your Bible and read Psalm 25. Stop anywhere you find yourself struck by something you've read. ***Record your thoughts here:*** _____

Now reread this text carefully, stopping at these check points:

(vs. 1) ***On a scale of 0 to 100, how much are you trusting (leaning your self into) God?***

(vs. 3) ***"No one who trusts in You will ever be disgraced, but disgrace comes to those who try to deceive others." (NLT) Are you deceiving others in any way that you know? Are you deceiving yourself?*** _____

(vs. 4-5) ***Is there any area in your life where you are trying to take your own path rather than wait for His?*** _____

(vs. 6-7) According to **Hebrews 10:14**, your sins have been completely forgiven and no longer separate you from your God. However, we can remain entangled in the remnants of shame from our sin until we allow Him to gently remove their effects. ***Is there any area within you that still carries the shame of past sin?***

How might God be asking you to trust Him in a new way in this area? _____

(vs. 8-11) God instructs those who humbly approach Him, those who admit their need of Him. ***Do you generally just try to do the best you can or do you live a lifestyle of dependence upon God's guidance?***

(vs. 12-15) There are two kinds of fear. There is the fear a slave or servant knows, which is the fear of displeasing their master and causing their security and standing with him to be shaken. Then there is the fear of a dearly loved child, who also fears displeasing his parent, but knows that his security and standing as a dearly loved child will not be shaken. Galatians 4:6-7 tells us we are to view ourselves as

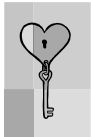
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dearly loved children of God rather than cowering, fearful slaves. **Which way do you view your relationship with God?**

Verse 14 says, **“The LORD confides in those who fear Him,”** (NIV) and **“Friendship with the Lord is reserved for those who fear Him. With them He shares the secrets of His covenant,”** (NLT). Which wording catches your heart and why?

(vs. 15-22) These passages may be of great comfort to you if your heart is overwhelmed with troubles. However, just knowing that God is **watching** will not bring your heart very much comfort. Our comfort comes when we know beyond a shadow of a doubt, that God is our one and only **actively – engaged – at – all - times rescuer**. We must keep our eyes fixed on the Lord.



“My eyes are ever on the Lord, for only He will release my feet from the snare.” (vs. 15 NIV)

Many times I find myself frustrated with a particular person in a trying situation. Sometimes it feels like **that person is the problem**. If they would just do this one thing that I want them to do, then everything else would be okay. Whenever I find myself frustrated with an individual or a situation, I discover that I have taken my eyes off the Lord. My strong, emotional response towards the person or circumstance is my big clue that I am not fully trusting God in this situation. While I might know (in theory) that God is in charge of the situation, I am not practicing that belief. **What I practice demonstrates what I really believe and really trust in my heart**. Whenever God points out to me that once again I am looking for the answer in a person or a circumstance rather than strictly looking to Him, I am forced to lay down all my frustration at God’s feet, rather than on the person or circumstances. I am forced to acknowledge that I have been focusing on the wrong thing. At all times, and in all situations, whether wonderful or horrible, **we need to be focusing on God!** **We will never miss the wonders of His Person or His work when we continually and repeatedly focus our eyes on HIM.**

What is the most significant message in this passage for you today? _____

With what new hope or insight do you close today’s study? Write it here as God’s special gift to you and keep this thought before you.

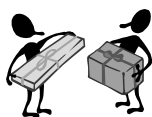


God’s special gift to me: _____

This week’s theme: _____



Take-Away: I will never miss what God has for me as long as I keep my eyes on Him.



Gathering together with other believers and sharing with one another is vital for a flourishing relationship with God. Even in our study of Adam and Eve we see the dynamic that humans need other humans. **Spend a few minutes looking back over your week’s entries. As you think back on all that has happened in this last week, where do**

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you recognize God's fingerprints, whispers, or guidance?

What is your most significant "take-away" this week? Prayerfully consider how you can share this with someone this week.

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