

## Double Up: 2X the Reach | 2x the Growth

### Week 3 Day 1 - GOD IS BIG and we are small.

Have you counted the hairs on your head lately? How about the stars in the night's sky? We may not be able to do this but God knows the exact number of each. There is so much that we don't know and will never know in this life. And yet God in all of His bigness, knows you. He knows the joys of your heart and the hurts of your heart. He knows your disappointments and your struggles in life. He knows the plans and hopes you have for your future. He knows the hopes you have for your children.

When Gods people who lived during the Old Testament were struggling with God's path for their life, God sent them His truth through the prophet Jeremiah.

*For I (God) know the plans I have for you” — [this is] the LORD’s declaration—“plans for [your] welfare, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.*

*You will call to Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.*

*You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.*

*Jeremiah 29:11-13 (HCSB)*

These words communicate God's intention toward His people. Are you His person? If you are these verses from Jeremiah apply to you. Read them over again and ask yourself:

What kind of thoughts does God have toward me?

When I call upon God and pray to Him what will He do?

When will I find God?

What part of my heart does God require?

God wants us to absolutely dependent upon Him. God does not reach down to us because He needs us but rather because we need Him. We were created to be in 'day in - day out' relationship with Him. God wants all of you, the good, bad and ugly. He want you to share your struggles and your successes with Him. John Piper explains it this way, "Even though God doesn't need us, He loves us, and He wants us to receive from him all the goodness, blessing and joy that he has for those who will be humble and dependent on him."

When the Apostle Paul was explaining to the Roman Christians how people miss God's good intention toward them this is what he said:

*Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn’t worship him as God or even give Him thanks.*

*And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like.*

*As a result, their minds became dark and confused.*

*Romans 1:21 (NLT)*

What wouldn't these people do?

What happened to their thinking?

In other translations the word 'worship' is communicated as glorify or honor. To worship/glorify/honor God is to live life in light of who God is. It is a person setting their intention to honor God in every decision.

God knows the struggle of a person's heart. He knows that the pursuit to fulfill our needs gets in the way of worshipping, glorifying and honoring Him. This is what Jesus said:

*“No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.*

*That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn't life more than food, and your body more than clothing?*

*Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are?*

*Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?*

*And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you.*

*Why do you have so little faith? "So don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?'*

*These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs.*

*Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and He will give you everything you need.*

*So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today."*

*Matthew 6:24-34 (NLT)*

How many times do you find the words worry or worries in the above verses?

What does 'to worry' mean to you?

Why can't a person serve two masters?

What is a person to seek above all else?

How is a person to live?

When two purposes come into conflict only one purpose will win. Jesus said that when the cross purposes of serving/worshipping God or obtaining more money come into conflict, one of them will win. The choice that is made will communicate who or what a person ultimately serves, worships and loves most. It is not that a person cannot have money/wealth, it is that when a choice is required which one has the most authority/sway over them? Many people in the Bible were very wealthy, Abraham, Job, David, Solomon, just to name a few. Holding tight to money is a declaration to God that He cannot be trusted to provide.

It takes dependent faith to seek the Kingdom of God above all else. It takes dependent faith to make righteous choices. The Christian life is a life of dependent faith. Not seeing and yet trusting God.

Prayer: Honestly share with God your concerns for the future. Ask Him to supply your specific need(s). Invite Him into your struggles of seeking His Kingdom first. Thank Him for the love and care He has for you.

*If I say, "My foot is slipping," Your faithful love will support me, Lord.*

*Psalms 94:18 (HCSB)*

## Week 3 Day 2 - Love the Lord your God.

*Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And he (Jesus) said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.*

*Matthew 22:36-38 (ESV)*

These verses are the foundation of a relationship with God. A relationship with God is a love relationship, He loves us, we are to love Him back. The first time God gave this commandment was after He rescued the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt (Deuteronomy 6:5). The Hebrew word for love is 'ahav'. It has a very strong meaning.

Here are the highlights of the definition of 'ahav' from 'The Complete Word Study Old Testament':

to love, desire, delight, like, be fond of, covet, be beloved, amiable, be a passionate lover. It implies an ardent and vehement inclination of the mind and a tenderness of affection at the same time. It has the extensive sense of the English word "love". It is used to describe the close attachment between parents and children, relationships by marriage.

Circle/notice the words desire, delight, passionate lover.

What does it look like in a person's life to have these feelings toward God?

What would you say are some of the attributes of a relationship between parent and child, and between marriage partners?

How should these attributes of relationship show up in our relationship with God?

The words that really surprised me in this definition were 'desire' and 'passionate lover'. This begs the questions, 'Do I desire God? Am I a passionate lover of God?' Also, the relationships God used to describe this kind of love were of those people with whom I live with and have a lifetime commitment to.

Look back at the verses from Matthew, what is the first thing we are to love Him with?

What would you say is a person's heart?

A person's heart is very important to God. He mentions it over 900 times in the Bible. Our heart is the center of our being, the center of our entire life. It is the source of a person's affections, desires, intentions and will.

A person's behaviors and words are an indicator of what is really going on in their heart. All the things a person struggles with in their life starts in their heart. The sins that show up as actions and words actually start in our heart.

In the Old Testament God gave this promise.

*"I will also sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your impurities and all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will place My Spirit within you and cause you to follow My statutes and carefully observe My ordinances."*

*Ezekiel 36:25-27 (HCSB)*

What two things does God give?

What does God remove?

What would you say are the differences between a stone and flesh?

God promised He would make a way to give people a new heart. When Jesus was explaining this to Nicodemus (John 3:1-21) He called it being 'born again'. With a new heart a person's life would be so radically changed it would be like being born into a new life. Being a Christian is agreeing with God about our sin (repentance), accepting God's gift of rescue from sin through Jesus, and then living in relationship with God for the rest their life.

Flesh feels, flesh responds, flesh is alive. A stone is dead, does not respond, does not feel and cannot love. The two most valuable gifts every Christian gets are a new heart and the Holy Spirit.

*Take delight in the LORD, and He will give you your heart's desires. Psalms 37:4 (HCSB)*

What is God's person to do?  
Then God will do what?

To delight in someone is to have a high degree of pleasure or enjoyment of them. It's hard to believe because of all of our misconceptions about God, but God is actually delightful.

When God gives a person a new heart He plants the seeds of new desires in their heart. These desires start out as a desire to know Him, a desire to love Him, a desire to please Him. As these new desires are fed with Gods Word/truth, as they are watered through prayer (talking to Him), and as life is lived in relationship with God, these new desires will grow.

A Christian will have conflicted desires. The new desires God gives will be in conflict with the old sinful desires. This conflict is the 'fight of faith'. The fight within our self to believe God, the fight to love God, the fight to trust God. However, when we delight ourselves in the Lord, He will change the desires of our heart. God's 'will' and our 'will' become the same 'will'. Additionally, the Holy Spirit will give a new passion to pursue God's desires. This is how the love, 'ahav' towards God grows and becomes stronger and more passionate.

Prayer: Thank God for His love of you, the real you, the you deep down inside you. Thank Him for your new heart of flesh that is alive towards Him. Thank Him for your personal life coach, the Holy Spirit. Ask Him to help you love Him. Ask Him to help you with the areas of your heart that are conflicted. Ask Him to help you feed on His Words and spend personal time talking to Him so that your love for Him will grow stronger and more passionate.

*Because he is lovingly devoted to Me, I will deliver him;  
I will protect him because he knows My name.  
When he calls out to Me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble.  
I will rescue him and give him honor.  
I will satisfy him with a long life and show him My salvation.  
Psalms 91:14-16 (HCSB)*

### Week 3 Day 3 - The GREAT rescue.

When Gods people in the Old Testament were slaves in Egypt God raised up a man named Moses to facilitate their rescue. When Moses was about 80 years old (never too old for a mission with God) God sent him to Egypt to speak for Him. This is the mission God gave Moses:

*Then the LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction (misery) of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters (oppressors). I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad (spacious) land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.*

*And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them.*

*Come (Therefore), I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."*

*But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?"*

*He said, "But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve (worship) God on this mountain."*

*Exodus 3:7-12 (ESV/HCSB)*

What did God see?

What did God hear?

What did God know?

What kind of future did God have for them?

What is it God would have them do after He has rescued them?

What does 'serve God' mean to you?

In our culture it would be easy to think, serving God as different from worshipping God. God considers them one and the same. Every time Moses meets with Pharaoh 'face to face' he tells him Gods words, "let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness". My thinking had always been, 'Cool, God rescued the people of Israel so now they are free from slavery, free to live their life. They don't have to be slaves any more'. God wasn't rescuing the people of Israel from slavery so they could do whatever they wanted; He rescued them so they could serve Him.

People in our day and age are in the same place as the people of Israel, enslaved. Rather than being a slave to Pharaoh in Egypt people are enslaved to other things which bring pain, grief, loss, and death. Not just death to their body but death to hopes, dreams, relationships, health, financial resources. God is never 'about' death, He is always 'about' life.

It is still God's mission to rescue people from a master who wants to use and abuse them. He rescues because He loves and because He wants to bring people, then and now, to a good place.

In order to be rescued and get to the good God has it is necessary to follow God. For the people of Israel, they had to follow God out of Egypt, which meant leaving all that they had known, all that was familiar. They had to follow God through the wilderness where there were no resources of water or food. They had to completely trust God for themselves and for their families. Then and only then would they get to the good place God had for them, a land of 'milk and honey', a home of goodness and sweetness.

This is the same for any person God would rescue. To get to God's good it is necessary to follow Him by being obedient even when it means doing life differently, even when it is uncomfortable and even when it is scary. And even when there doesn't seem to be resources to live life God's way.

God didn't leave the people of Israel to figure it out on their own. He was with them every step of the way, protecting them and providing for them. Gods provided for them in unexpected ways, water from a rock and food that mysteriously showed up in the morning.

God explains His relationship with people who would follow Him to the good He has for them this way:  
(Leviticus 26:12)

I will be their God. (They will love and serve me.)  
And they will be my people. (Under My protections and provision.)

Through Israel's journey with Him, God taught them and He teaches us that to stay under God's 'umbrella' of provision, protection, grace, and blessing requires a heart and life of love and worship/service to Him. It requires continuing to walk forward with God even in the difficult and scary parts to get to the place of Gods promise. This is the best possible path through life.

The people of Israel left Egypt to serve God. They followed and served God through the wilderness so that God could get them to His promise. A Christian walks out of an old life, into a new life, to follow and serve God so that He can get them to His promise.

Prayer: Share with God the difficulties of trusting Him through your 'wilderness'. Thank Him for the times in the past when He has protected and provided for you. Ask Him to show you His goodness and greatness. Ask Him to help you remember His promises.

*And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable.*

*This is truly the way to worship him.*

*Romans 12:1 (NLT)*

## Week 3 Day 4 - God's retirement plan

Our culture tells us we should have a savings plan for our retirement. There are all sorts of acronyms to communicate such plans, IRA, SEPT IRA, ROTH IRA, 401(k), 403(b). Within these plans there are a myriad of investment choices, CD's, mutual funds, stocks and bonds. The whole idea of retirement saving is that a person should set aside money now, so that in the future it will be available to meet their needs when they are unable to work. This is responsible and reasonable wisdom.

Jesus gives this caution:

*“Don’t collect for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But collect for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don’t break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Matthew 6:19-21 (HCSB)*

Why does Jesus say it is futile to store up treasures on earth?

What is a person's heart connected to?

What would you say are some of the treasures people collect?

Jesus spoke often about money. The use of money tells God what a person really believes, where they really put their trust, and what they really love. God says a wise place to collect/store up treasures is in heaven because that is the place where they are truly safe and available for the future.

Jesus told a story to help us understand the foolishness of storing up treasures on earth.

*Then He told them a parable: “A rich man’s land was very productive. He thought to himself, ‘What should I do, since I don’t have anywhere to store my crops? I will do this,’ he said. ‘I’ll tear down my barns and build bigger ones and store all my grain and my goods there. Then I’ll say to myself, “You have many goods stored up for many years. Take it easy; eat, drink, and enjoy yourself.”’*

*“But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life is demanded of you. And the things you have prepared—whose will they be?’*

*That’s how it is with the one who stores up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”*

*Luke 12:16-21 (HCSB)*

What would you say was the rich mans purpose/reason for storing up more and more of his resources?

Who did this man store up his resources for?

What is your definition of 'rich'?

Why was this man foolish?

One definition of rich is to have more than enough, to have a supply greater than a need.

Knowing the future can help a person make wise investment choices. There is a future we all avoid thinking about. This future is the same for rich and poor. The future is that one day our body is going to die. The older I get the more this truth becomes real to me. Grey hairs take over brown, easy movement now has a few glitches and reading glasses are now the norm. Maybe aging is really Gods grace, Gods warning system to tell me one day my body is going to quit working altogether. A sobering thought.

However, the end of our earthly life is not the end of our story. There is a 'happily ever after' for those who know and love God. God gives people the ability to produce wealth. At creation God generously gave humanity the gift of all the resources of the world. God views the work of transforming these resources into products and services that can be sold and bought, to provide for our needs, as a good thing. He views honest, righteous commerce as a good endeavor.

However, God gives these warnings:

*Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day. And if you forget the LORD your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you shall surely perish. Deuteronomy 8:17-19 (ESV)*

What is a person to remember?

*Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be arrogant or to set their hope on the uncertainty of wealth, but on God, who richly provides us with all things to enjoy. [Instruct them] to do what is good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good reserve for the age to come, so that they may take hold of life that is real. 1 Timothy 6:17-19 (HCSB)*

What is a person to be rich in?

Jesus explains how to invest treasures/resources in heaven and be rich toward God:

*When the Son of Man (Jesus) comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on His right and the goats on the left. Then the King (Jesus) will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

*For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat;*

*I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink;*

*I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me;*

*I was sick and you took care of Me; I was in prison and you visited Me.'*

*Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You something to drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or without clothes and clothe You? When did we see You sick, or in prison, and visit You?'*

*And the King will answer them, 'I assure you: Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me'. Matthew 25:31-40 (HCSB)*

When a person serves others with their time, talent and treasure who are they really serving?

It's hard to imagine one day our money and financial resources will be useless. It is easy to believe that to have an excess of financial resources is God's blessing when it is really God's test. A person enters life with nothing, and exits the same way. However, God gives the opportunity to work, to provide for ourselves and our family and to invest/send resources to our next life. Randy Alcorn states, "You can't take it with you - but you can send it ahead".<sup>1</sup>

Prayer: Ask God to teach you how to be rich towards Him. Invited God into your finances and into your struggle to have the 'long view' of a future life in heaven. Thank Him for all the financial grace He has given to you.

*Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you. James 1:27 (NLT)*

*Your heart must not be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me (Jesus).*

*In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if not, I would have told you.*

*I am going away to prepare a place for you. If I go away and prepare a place for you,*

*I will come back and receive you to Myself, so that where I am you may be also. John 14:1-3 (HCSB)*

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<sup>1</sup> Money, Possessions and Eternity

## Week 3 Day 5 - Story

When you were a child did you have a story book that you wanted read over and over? Do you remember the first time you went to a movie theater to watch a 'story' on the 'big screen'? Do you have a family story that is passed down from generation to generation? You have a life story. We love stories. God actually made us to love stories.

God has a story and it begins "In the beginning God . . ." The whole history of humanity is God's love story. It has always been God's intention that He would have a people who loved and trusted Him and that He would be their God who loved and provided for them. And then it all went so terribly wrong. People went their own way, ignoring God, disrespecting God, believing lies about God, even hating God. And yet God still loved them. In the parts of God's story that He had written down (our Bible) we find God orchestrating ways to cause people to return to the love and grace He has for them. The greatest thing God did was to send Jesus to teach us and to rescue us from the lies we believe. It is God's great desire that all people would come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4) of who He is and His great love for them.

The Son of God (Jesus) left the riches of heaven, was born into humanity as a baby, grew to be a man, lived a sinless life, taught the truth of God's love, grace and judgment. Then Jesus died the death that should have been ours, and then conquered death so that those who commit themselves to Him would have eternal life.

*For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ:  
Though He was rich, for your sake He became poor,  
so that by His poverty you might become rich. 2 Corinthians 8:9 (HCSB)*

Who was rich and became poor?  
Why did He do this?

This is what was said when Jesus asked His disciples who they believed Him to be:

*Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."  
And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you,  
but my Father who is in heaven.  
And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it". Matthew 16:16-18 (ESV)*

Who does Peter say Jesus is?  
What will not prevail against the church?  
Who builds the church?

The truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, is the rock (unmovable foundation) on which the church (people who are committed to Jesus) is built.

Walls and gates are used to hold something out or to hold something in. Perhaps the gates of hell are to do both. Hold people in and hold Jesus out. Jesus is saying that hell's gates will not hold back His mission of rescuing people. Jesus said I am more powerful than the things that might hold me out and stronger than the things that hold people in. It is Jesus' purpose to rescue people from Satan, sin and death.

Jesus invites people to join Him on his mission to rescue people. When Jesus' physical time on earth had come to an end and it was time for Him to go back to Father God these are the instructions He left to His people.

*Then He (Jesus) said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation.  
Mark 16:15 (HCSB)*

*Then Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."  
Matt 28:18-20 (HCSB)*

Where does Jesus tell His people to go?  
What 4 things does Jesus tell His people to do?  
Where do you fit into Jesus' instructions?

God invites people to be a part of His story. And when they accept His invitation they become a part of His story and His mission. It becomes their responsibility to tell God's story to others.

Prayer: Thank God for sharing His love story with you. Thank Him that you have been included in His eternal story. Ask Him how He wants you to have an active role in communicating His love story.

God's story has a beginning, an end and then a new beginning.

*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth,  
for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away,  
and the sea no longer existed.  
I also saw the Holy City, new Jerusalem,  
coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband.  
Then I heard a loud voice from the throne:  
Look! God's dwelling is with humanity, and He will live with them.  
They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.  
Rev 21:1-3 (HCSB)*

God's story starts 'In the beginning God' and ends with grace.

*The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen.  
Rev 22:21 (HCSB)*