

# Discipleship Journey

*Spring 2024*

# What is the *Discipleship Journey*?

*Our Discipleship Journey is designed to help you see that God is near and that he wants to have a meaningful relationship with you. Whether you have been walking with God for years or you just met him today, the tools below will help you get to know how deep, how wide, and how vast his love really is.*

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## **3 main tools:**

### **4 Day Reading Plan**

Designed to build the habit of daily scripture reading. It will change your life and increase your understanding of who God is and why he loves you personally.

### **The Journal**

Written by members of Beach church, this journal entry will give you deeper insight to the themes discussed on the weeks bible reading plan. It is also a convenient way to give context to life group attendants that have not been able to read their scripture for the week yet.

### **Weekly Thought Questions**

Designed to provoke deeper thought related to your weekly bible reading. These questions are a great tool to explore God's will and discuss our thoughts and insights during our life groups. Feel free to consider these questions in private, or to ask them in your group gathering.

# Week One

## WEEK 1 READING PLAN

Day 1:  
Romans 1:1-7

Day 2:  
Romans 1:8-17

Day 3:  
Romans 1:18-32

Day 4:  
Romans 2:1-11

## WEEK 1 JOURNAL ENTRY

*Paul's opening words to the Romans show us what to expect throughout the rest of the book. It's full of encouragement for believers, God's heart for inclusivity, and the practical application of God's law through the lens of his grace.*

*From the beginning of his letter, Paul shows us just how important an encouraging community is to faith. In Romans 1:11-12 he says, "I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong—that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith." We learn our faith from those who have it. We learn about and experience spiritual gifts by seeing people use theirs. Not only this but we are encouraged by others' faith and encourage others through living out our own.*

*Paul preached the gospel not just to those who didn't know Jesus, but most of his letters were written to those who already had some kind of faith in God. He continually preached the gospel to those who needed to hear it, whether it was their first time hearing it or not. The Roman church was surrounded by a culture that "exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator" (Romans 1:25). Paul's words were meant to encourage the believers to keep their faith strong despite what was happening around them. Although we live in a different time, context, and culture, encouragement is still needed in our faith communities today. The gospel message is not just for those who haven't heard it; we would do well to hear it often, no matter how long we've been following Jesus. Preach this good news to one another, being mutually encouraged by each other's faith and removing the possibility of exchanging the truth about God for a lie.*

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## WEEK 1 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. How has your faith been encouraged by someone else's? How has your faith been an encouragement to someone else?*
- 2. Why would Paul make it a point to begin this letter (one full of practical theology) with words of encouragement to the believers?*
- 3. If a gospel message of encouragement is what Paul used to prevent the believers from turning from God, how might this inform the way you evangelize?*

# Week Two

## WEEK 2 READING PLAN

Day 1:  
Romans 2:12-24

Day 2:  
Romans 2:25-29

Day 3:  
Romans 3:1-8

Day 4:  
Romans 3:9-20

## WEEK 2 JOURNAL ENTRY

*This portion of Romans cannot be fully understood without some knowledge of the Jewish faith. The Law Paul refers to here is not just what we read in the Old Testament as the Ten Commandments, sacrificial rites, or temple rules. For the original readers of this book, the Law was their entire life and faith. It's hard to compare this to anything we have in our culture today. It would be like everything in our lives - where we live, our careers, what we eat, our vacations - was completely decided upon based on our faith! Many people today consult God on some of these matters, asking the Holy Spirit to guide them as they buy a house or apply for a job. But when was the last time you heard a sermon about what kind of meat to eat, or not to eat certain foods in the same meal? Have you ever heard a sermon where the pastor shared a recipe and explained that eating food in a particular way was essential to salvation?*

*The answer is probably no. Although this is an oversimplification of the faith of the Roman church at this time, it can help us understand what the Law meant to these believers. Paul was tasked with updating their understanding of the Law since Jesus came. Through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, we have new freedoms regarding what we eat, where we live, and how we spend our weekends. He explains that righteousness is no longer a list of rules and regulations. It is a gift of God! The Law that set up these right ways of living is still valuable as a guideline for what is right and what is wrong, but the new measure of being in God's family is his faithfulness. No longer does following the Law define our faith. Instead, God's love to overcome the power of sin in our lives is our saving grace. This is the only way we can be righteous - faith in Jesus and the power of his Holy Spirit working in our lives.*

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## WEEK 2 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you describe "righteousness?" What does righteous living look like?
2. Jesus didn't live, die, and resurrect just so we could eat any kind of meat or not be circumcised. But these are two main points of the Law that Peter and Paul (in Acts and Romans, respectively) discuss regarding the new way of life through Christ. Why would these be so important to write about? What can we learn from this today?
3. Romans 3:20 says, "Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin." Following the law doesn't save us, but not following the law separates us from God and others. Discuss the difference.



# Week Three

## WEEK 3 READING PLAN

Day 1:  
Romans 3:21-31

Day 2:  
Romans 4:1-12

Day 3:  
Romans 4:13-25

Day 4:  
Romans 5:1-11

## WEEK 3 JOURNAL ENTRY

*“Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him” (Romans 4:18). With a 100-year-old body, a barren womb, and an unwavering faith, Abraham and Sarah knew God would fulfill his promise. They didn’t know how, but they believed in God’s power and faithfulness. God had never let them down before, so even though there was an impossible promise before them, Abraham and Sarah knew where to put their trust. Imagine the faith it takes to believe it was easier that God would do the impossible than that he would break his promise! God’s faithfulness is part of who he is, which means it cannot change. He can’t break his promises. He can’t be unfaithful.*

*Abraham knew it was more possible for him and his wife to bear children in their old age than for God to fail, even though it was physically impossible for them. But God created the entire world out of nothing in Genesis 1:1-2, so what was one more person? Abraham didn’t know how, but he knew God would give him a child. This faith also allowed him to trust God when he faced other difficulties beyond infertility. Abraham’s faith in God brought him peace and hope no matter what happened. Paul says it this way in Romans 5:3-4, “We also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character, and character, hope.” We are reminded again that “Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed” (Romans 4:18). This faith is still an example to us; a testimony of who God is and the power found in his unbreakable promises.*

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## WEEK 3 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. The Message version says Romans 4:20-21 this way, “He plunged into the promise and came up strong, ready for God, sure that God would make good on what he had said.” What promises of God are you diving into? Are you ready for God to fulfill his promises in your life?*
- 2. Abraham’s faith was credited to him as righteousness, and Romans 4:24 shows that we also will be credited righteousness based on what we believe. Why would this be better than being called righteous based on our actions?*
- 3. If “faith without deeds is dead” (James 2:26), why does Paul spend nearly three whole chapters explaining righteousness through faith to the church of Rome? How does Abraham’s righteousness through faith inform your understanding of salvation through Jesus?*

# Week Four

## WEEK 4 READING PLAN

Day 1:  
Romans 5:12-21

Day 2:  
Romans 6:1-14

Day 3:  
Romans 6:15-23

Day 4:  
Romans 7:1-6

## WEEK 4 JOURNAL ENTRY

*This is the bad news-good news section of Paul's letter to the Roman church. Paul skillfully describes in this passage how the good news triumphs over the bad news. While the wages of sin is death, the gift of God is eternal life with Jesus!*

*The bad news is that, as descendants of Adam, all of us are born into sin and with it, unrighteousness, separation from God, judgment, and ultimately death. We are without hope, unable to rescue ourselves, no matter how good we try to be, and how diligently we try to keep the law. Sin is disobedience, rebellion, and failing to do what we know to be right. It is a deadly poison to our souls.*

*But the good news is that through the grace of Father God, Jesus paid the penalty for our sins with His death, delivered us from all of it, and was raised to eternal life, which He invites us to share with Him. All He asks is that we accept His gift of grace. When we do, we are brought from disobedience to righteousness, from judgment to deliverance, from separation to a relationship with God, from death to life! Sin's power and control are broken and buried, and our old sinful natures are buried with it. We are free! We are now fully capable of beginning the transformation that aligns with our God's spirit of life and stop carrying the corpse of our old sinful nature.*

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## WEEK 4 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. Paul asks, shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace (6:15)? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase (6:1)? Does the freedom grace gives us allow us to do whatever we want or whatever benefits us? Discuss Paul's answers to these questions.*
- 2. Does our freedom from sin mean we will never sin? Why or why not?*
- 3. What do you think Paul means when he says we have died to the law?*
- 4. Does grace mean we need not even try to do what is good or right or lawful? Why or why not?*

# Week Five

## WEEK 5 READING PLAN

Day 1:  
Romans 7:7-13

Day 2:  
Romans 7:14-25

Day 3:  
Romans 8:1-11

Day 4:  
Romans 8:12-17

## WEEK 5 JOURNAL ENTRY

Paul is transparent about his own struggle with sin in hopes of demonstrating to his readers the only path to a place with no condemnation, free from sin's grip. The pattern is familiar and one that all of us who desire to follow Jesus struggle with.

First, there is confusion: "What I want to do, I do not do, but what I hate, I do" (Romans 7:15). Paul says he has the desire to do what is good but cannot carry it out and the evil he does not want to do, he keeps on doing. He contrasts the conflict between the willingness of the mind and the power of the flesh, as Jesus warned His disciples in the garden, just before His arrest, when He said the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak (Matthew 26:41)

Next comes disillusionment – Paul calls himself a wretched man -- followed quickly by desperation, "Who will rescue me from this body of death" (Romans 7:24)? And finally, Paul answers his question, exalting, "Praise be to God -- through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Romans 7:25). Jesus, who paid the penalty for all our sins, is the only answer. Our hope and justification are found only in the real person of Jesus, not a plan, program, decision, or cure. We rightly deserve hell; only His death and resurrection can save us.

Paul has even more good news on this subject. If Christ is in us, even though our bodies are dead because of sin, our spirits are alive because of His righteousness. And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in us, He who raised Jesus from the dead will also give life to our mortal bodies through His Spirit, who lives in us (Romans 8:10-11). Defeat is inevitable whenever a believer fails to appropriate the Holy Spirit. However, things change when we understand the same power that conquered the grave lives in us!

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## WEEK 5 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to live, as Paul says, in accordance with either the sinful nature or the Holy Spirit? (Romans 8:8)
2. Reread Romans 7:15. What stands out to you about this scripture and why?
3. What role do you think secrecy plays in sin?



# Week Six

## WEEK 6 READING PLAN

Day 1:  
Romans 8:18-25

Day 2:  
Romans 8:26-30

Day 3:  
Romans 8:31-39

Day 4:  
Romans 9:1-13

## WEEK 6 JOURNAL ENTRY

*What a powerful declaration of the glory that is ours if we just accept the gift Jesus so freely and lovingly offers us, no matter our past! God knew us before we were born and so He appointed us beforehand to be shaped from the inside out into the very essence of Jesus. We have no hope of achieving this on our own, and all of hell is trying to keep it from happening. But God wants to transform us continually and internally to be like Jesus. This is more than Him helping and saving us. This is moving from sanctification to glorification. This is God wanting us to be like Him!*

*The result? Paul says we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. Think about that. It means we come out of hardship and suffering stronger and richer than when we went in! We can't be separated from Jesus – not by trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword or anything else the enemy of our souls can throw at us. For those who have faith in Jesus, there is nothing that can separate us from Him.*

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## WEEK 6 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. What do you think Paul means when he writes that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God? (Romans 8:21)*
- 2. How do we allow Holy Spirit to intercede for us when we do not know what or how to pray? (Romans 8:26) What does this look like in your own prayer time?*
- 3. When times are darkest and things look bleakest, how do we hold on to the promise that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him and have been called according to His purpose? (Romans 8:28) As you look back on your life, recall a time when this truth has played out.*



# Week Seven

## WEEK 7 READING PLAN

Day 1:  
Romans 9:14-29

Day 2:  
Romans 9:30-33

Day 3:  
Romans 10:1-15

Day 4:  
Romans 10:16-21

## WEEK 7 JOURNAL ENTRY

*In Romans 9:14-10:21, Paul discusses the concepts of God's righteousness, faith, and the role of the law in the context of salvation. Paul addresses the question of God's righteousness in choosing some individuals for salvation while seemingly excluding others. He emphasizes that God's choices are not based on human effort or adherence to religious rituals. Instead, it is a gift from God that is received through faith in Jesus Christ.*

*Paul argues that the message of salvation has been addressed and offered to both Jews and Gentiles, but not all have accepted it. He expresses his deep desire for the salvation of his fellow Jews and emphasizes that righteousness is attained not through strict adherence to the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul introduces the concept that there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile in terms of salvation.*

*After reading Romans 10:1-4, Paul contrasts the righteousness that comes through faith with the righteousness that one might try to achieve through strict observance of the law. He emphasizes that God's righteousness is revealed in His sovereign choice and in the inclusive nature of the gospel message, which is offered to both Jews and Gentiles.*

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## WEEK 7 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. How does Paul's explanation of God's righteousness challenge common perceptions of salvation, especially when he stresses that it's a gift you receive through faith, not something you earn by working hard or following rituals?*
- 2. Reflecting on Paul's statement that there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile in regard to salvation, how can the church today share the treasure that is the gospel message among diverse cultural and religious backgrounds?*
- 3. Knowing that righteousness is not attained through strict adherence to the law, how can we navigate our lives and decisions around salvation and faith with respect to religious rituals and traditions?*

# Week Eight

## WEEK 8 READING PLAN

Day 1:  
Romans 11:1-10

Day 2:  
Romans 11:11-24

Day 3:  
Romans 11:25-36

Day 4:  
Romans 12:1-8

## WEEK 8 JOURNAL ENTRY

*Paul's letter to the Romans addresses the issue of sin and reveals the solution: God's grace. Instead of seeing the world as a rigid set of rules and laws, Paul views righteousness as something Jesus earned through his obedient life, credited to believers through faith. Jesus, in his complete righteousness, serves as the conduit for individuals to achieve their own righteousness through steadfast faith in Him and the Gospel.*

*Paul addresses the idea of God's continued faithfulness to Israel, emphasizing the existence of a remainder chosen by grace. He warns against arrogance among the Gentile believers, reminding them that just as branches can be grafted into the olive tree (representing God's people), they should not boast over the natural branches (representing Israel). The passage emphasizes God's plan to show mercy to all, both Jews and Gentiles.*

*In Romans 12:1-2, Paul urges believers to offer themselves as living sacrifices, emphasizing the transformative power of faith. Paul illustrates that God's righteousness is revealed in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Through faith, individuals not only showcase righteous behavior but also experience a beautiful transformation that is guided by the influence of the Holy Spirit.*

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## WEEK 8 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. Reflecting on Paul's description of a transformative process through faith and the influence of the Holy Spirit, how do you personally relate to the idea of continuous spiritual growth and transformation in your faith journey? What role has the Holy Spirit played in guiding this process?*
- 2. When we think about Paul's call to offer ourselves as living sacrifices in view of God's mercy, how do you think this idea of worship through sacrifice aligns with modern concepts of spirituality and service?*
- 3. How does the perspective on God's grace and righteousness conflict with the traditional thought process of earning salvation through rule following? How can this impact the way we view our faith journey?*

# Week Nine

## WEEK 9 READING PLAN

Day 1:  
Romans 12:9-21

Day 2:  
Romans 13:1-7

Day 3:  
Romans 13:8-14

Day 4:  
Romans 14:1-13

## WEEK 9 JOURNAL ENTRY

*This week's scriptures emphasize that all church members, despite differences, are connected in Christ, highlighting the importance of unity and inclusivity. Christian unity is a core principle where individuals are permanent members of God's family—the church. Unlike other worldly divisions, the church remains undivided by physical, cultural, racial, and social status or educational distinctions; its unity stems from the shared experience of God's grace through Jesus.*

*In Romans 12:4-6, Paul likens the church to a body with diverse members, each having unique gifts. He touches on the significance of every member, regardless of background, stressing their individual roles in contributing to the unity of the church. No member holds a superior position, and each is crucial to the Church's well-being. The Christian response, as Paul notes, is to cherish fellow members, recognizing their unique gifts and contributions. Paul encourages sincere love, goodness, humility, hospitality, and blessings even during moments of persecution. The message is simple: unity in Christ, appreciation for diversity, and expressions of love within and beyond the faith community.*

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## WEEK 9 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. Reflecting on Paul's call for sincere love, humility, and hospitality among Christians, how might these qualities influence our behavior towards people in our community of faith that don't vote like us, think like us, and view the world differently?*
- 2. How can Christian communities embrace unity, regardless of our differences, inside and outside of the Church?*
- 3. How can we ensure that every member feels valued and understands their unique role in contributing to the overall unity of the faith community?*



# Week Ten

## WEEK 10 READING PLAN

Day 1:  
Romans 14:14-23

Day 2:  
Romans 15:1-13

Day 3:  
Romans 15:14-33

Day 4:  
Romans 16:1-27

## WEEK 10 JOURNAL ENTRY

Throughout the scripture passages, we see an overarching theme of unity and togetherness in the examples and principles presented. For instance, in Romans 14:19 Paul states “...let us pursue what promotes peace and what builds up one another”. We all hear “be kind to each other” and “love your neighbor” however, living out this truth can be difficult. Paul is challenging us to pursue the things, conversations, relationships, lifestyle, etc. that promote peace. This doesn’t mean that life will never feel overwhelming or chaotic. God is calling us to have conversations, habits, commitments, and dreams that honor Him and help us draw closer to Him.

Unity is presented again in Romans 15:1 which says “...we who are strong must bear the weaknesses of those without strength, and not to please ourselves”. This can be a burdensome principle to live out, even in relationships with those you love. Helping others through a difficult time in their life is not easy but it’s something that we see Jesus do all throughout His ministry. Paul is not saying that we should be the ones to fix others but to point them towards Jesus, the true healer.

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## WEEK 10 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Re-read Romans 14:19. In what way can you pursue what promotes peace and builds up others in your day-to-day life?
2. How can you pursue peace when life feels chaotic?
3. Read Matthew 11:28-30. When walking with someone through a difficult season, how can this scripture help you to do this in a way that is healthy and pointing the person towards Jesus?

# Week Eleven

## WEEK 11 READING PLAN

Day 1:  
1 Peter Introduction

Day 2:  
1 Peter 1:1-9

Day 3:  
1 Peter 1:10-16

Day 4:  
1 Peter 1:17-25

## WEEK 11 JOURNAL ENTRY

*Peter begins his first letter with a greeting to believers scattered throughout the known world, which has been extended to believers throughout the world in our time (1 Peter 1:1-2). His greeting is followed by enthusiastic, joyful praise. Salvation and Christ's resurrection are the sources of Christian hope, which gives us the power to endure suffering and hold fast to our faith (1 Peter 1:3-10). 1 Peter 1:10-11 briefly describes how the Old Testament prophets sought and looked forward to this salvation.*

*Peter calls on us to live obedient, holy lives. The cross remains central to Peter's message as he points out the high price of our salvation in 1 Peter 1:18-21. As we have experienced the love of Jesus through His sacrifice, we are called to love others in the same way. This is not simply a legalistic call; it is a call to love others deeply and from the heart. This is followed by a reminder of the enduring, imperishable nature of the word of God. In 1 Peter 1:25, Peter proclaims that "...the word of the Lord endures forever".*

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## WEEK 11 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read verses 3-7 aloud. What in this passage can you take to heart when you are faced with challenging circumstances?
2. A definition of holiness is "separate " or "set apart ". In verse 17 Peter encourages Christians to "live your lives as strangers here". How does this deepen your understanding of biblical holiness? What do you find challenging about "living as a stranger"?
3. In verse 24 Peter quotes Isaiah 40:6-8 to describe the enduring Word of God compared to the perishable nature of this life. What do these scriptures teach us about God? About us? About the relationship between God and humanity?

# Week Twelve

## WEEK 12 READING PLAN

Day 1:  
1 Peter 2:1-10

Day 2:  
1 Peter 2:11-17

Day 3:  
1 Peter 2:18-25

Day 4:  
1 Peter 3:1-7

## WEEK 12 JOURNAL ENTRY

Peter continues his call for holy living by challenging us to put away certain habits and behaviors (v 1); note that these are matters of the spirit and heart more than law. He immediately follows with the reasons: so that we may grow spirituality in our salvation (v 2) and "come to him" (see Mt. 11:28) and be built up. Peter is sharing the importance of holy living in effort to exemplify the growth in salvation.

Beginning with verse 13 Peter describes how Christians should relate to earthly authorities and to individuals who have authority over us. Again, Peter gives his reason, we "...should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men." (v.15b NIV). He encourages believers to endure suffering, especially if that suffering is for doing good. Always pointing to Christ, he reminds us that Jesus suffered for us.

In the beginning of 1 Peter Chapter 2, he describes Christian relations within marriage. While some of the specifics (braided hair) speak to a specific cultural context (a little beyond this scope) don't let this distract you from Peter's desire for Christians to focus on the inner self over outward success and appearance (v.4).

Peter also speaks directly on the subject of women and men in married relationships. The subject of "submission" and "respect" is brought up, notice that this is addressed after empowering women to be faithful to God even when their partner is not in a relationship with him; and both genders are asked to be honoring, kind, and respectful to one another. Arriving at the emphasis made in verse 7, "she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life." This echoes corresponding instructions for husbands to be considerate and respectful. In Ephesians 5:22-31. Guiding us to honor one another, and empowering us to live in godly submission, without losing any of our value. If we can figure out how to live like this with our partners and those we love the most, we can hopefully begin to treat even strangers in the way that Christ would treat us.

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## WEEK 12 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do Peter's reasons for holy living shape your view of moral living?
2. Read 2:11-12 in the group. What does this passage teach us about living "in" the world without being "of" the world? How does this shape your view of our witness to the world?
3. Read 2:15-17. What are some things you've observed that distract or detract from our witness? How can this passage help guide us to more visibly holy behavior?



# Week Thirteen

## WEEK 13 READING PLAN

Day 1:  
1 Peter 3:8-12

Day 2:  
1 Peter 3:13-22

Day 3:  
1 Peter 4:1-6

Day 4:  
1 Peter 4:7-11

## WEEK 13 JOURNAL ENTRY

*Peter continues his exhortation for Christian living by emphasizing essential qualities: sympathy, love, compassion, and humility (1 Peter 3:8). He quotes Psalm 34:12-16 to encourage believers to keep their tongues from evil and deceitful speech; reinforcing his message in 1 Peter 2:1. Peter is emphasizing on the inward spirit rather than law. Of utmost importance is the centrality of Christ, that through His life, death, burial, and resurrection, we are saved (1 Peter 3:15).*

*Again reminding us of Christ's suffering for our sins, he encourages Christians to persevere. Peter does not simply instruct but again points to purpose: that we might live our lives for the will of God (1 Peter 4:2).*

*In 1 Peter 4:7-11 Peter exhorts us to be self-controlled, to love, to serve, and to be careful with our speech. These are ways that we can reflect the heart of Christ and His character. Again he gives purpose: "...that in all things God may be praised" (1 Peter 4:11).*

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## WEEK 13 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. In 1 Peter 4:4 Peter says that unbelievers "find it strange" that believers do not participate in some of their practices. In what ways might we "act strangely" in ways that set us apart from the world we live in?*
- 2. How does Peter's view of the purpose of suffering shape your views of suffering?*
- 3. Read 1 Peter 4:10 in the group. What are some gifts you have that you could use to serve?*

# Week Fourteen

## WEEK 14 READING PLAN

Day 1:  
1 Peter 4:12-19

Day 2:  
1 Peter 5:1-4

Day 3:  
1 Peter 5:5-14

Day 4:  
2 Peter 1:1-11

## WEEK 14 JOURNAL ENTRY

1 Peter 4:12 opens up by telling us that the trials we're suffering here on earth will be worth it when His glory is revealed. James 1:2-3 explains it by saying "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance." Peter is trying to warn us that we, as Christians, should not be surprised by tough trials, but to actually expect them. God doesn't promise that making the right choices will lead us to an easy life. This can be a harsh reality sometimes because our human nature craves safety and comfort. Trusting in God's character allows believers to consider suffering for Christ's sake a thing worth rejoicing in - even while we undoubtedly would prefer it to stop.

Peter continues sharing the mission of elders and church leaders, that guiding others by example is not a way to serve yourself or any other man, but to serve God. Those around us are God's people, not our projects. Peter emphasizes the importance of leading for the sole mission of serving God, not for money, power, or control. It's easy in our daily life to focus on ourselves and what we need, rather than how we can better serve God's people. Even when we do make that choice to serve others, it can feel like an obligation and not something we're eager to do. God is urging us not to serve out of any religious obligation or to earn others' approval, but only out of free will.

This passage ends by reassuring us that we've been fully equipped to endure these trials, lead others, and flee the enemy. But we have a choice about whether or not we'll really use those qualities. This requires effort on our part. We receive these qualities through a relationship with God, the source of all life, the only path to being fully equipped to live as God calls us to do. Peter says that seeking the qualities he listed in the previous verses and having them growing in us, is the way to effective and fruitful gifts as Christian people. He reminds us to "make every effort" to grow in these qualities. It takes work. It doesn't happen overnight.

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## WEEK 14 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What trials are you currently experiencing/suffering? How do you think God is using these trials to strengthen you?
2. When have you served God out of obligation rather than serving Him willingly? How did you feel through that season?
3. What role do you have in your job/community/relationship, where you can lead others? Do you lead by example or just by explanation?
4. 2 Peter 1:5-7 tells us that God has given us everything we need for a fruitful life: faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. Which of these qualities comes most naturally to you? Which is the most difficult?

# Week Fifteen

## WEEK 15 READING PLAN

Day 1:  
2 Peter 1:12-21

Day 2:  
2 Peter 2:1-10

Day 3:  
2 Peter 2:11-22

Day 4:  
2 Peter 3:1-9

## WEEK 15 JOURNAL ENTRY

*In 2 Peter, Peter shares the necessities of our faith and the fruit that shows itself when we abide in Jesus. In 2 Peter 1:10-12, in the same theme, Peter reminds God's people to "make every effort" to live richly in Jesus Christ, even if they were already established in the truth of what the Son of Man came to do in the lives of His people.*

*As Peter continued his ministry, he made every effort to make sure the gospel would be known throughout the world so that even when he departed from place to place, it would be remembered well by the people. As a preface before preaching, Peter goes on to share the testimony of being with Jesus on the holy mountain when God the Father showed his glory on Jesus saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased."*

*Faithful and loving words like this show the character of God and the love that He has not just for His one and only Son, but for the rest of us as His children too. He desires a relationship where pursuit goes both ways. Peter was equipping the church to be knowledgeable in their faith as He had become knowledgeable by the Lord. However, Peter knew that to just be knowledgeable would multiply more Pharisees rather than followers of Christ. It is a beautiful hope that our mission today is the same as Peter's was with the church in that time. That very mission can be found in Jesus' final command as he ascended into Heaven in Matthew 28:19-20, The Great Commission.*

*Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal how you should be growing in the faith today. Sometimes learning the knowledge of Him can be uncomfortable or challenging in many ways; but with Jesus, we can make room for Him to develop us in ways that are proving and unfathomable. "But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect." (1 Peter 3:15).*

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## WEEK 15 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. How does the growth or lack of growth of our personal relationship with Christ affect our ministry?*
- 2. As Christians, what are some ways that we can encourage both ourselves and others to grow in knowledge of Christ?*
- 3. What are some practices you have implemented to remember God in your daily life?*



# Week Sixteen

## WEEK 16 READING PLAN

Day 1:  
2 Peter 3:10-14

Day 2:  
2 Peter 3:14-18

Day 3:  
Reflect on your time  
this semester

Day 4:  
Pray for next semester  
of Life Groups

## WEEK 16 JOURNAL ENTRY

In this week's reading, Peter writes of what we refer to as "The Day of The Lord".

As he explains what it will be like when Jesus comes back, he probes a challenging question in 2 Peter 3:11: "...what kind of people ought you to be?". As we wait for the second coming of Jesus, we are to live holy and godly lives. This means choosing to follow after Jesus and becoming more like Him. It can be difficult to know what that might look like from a practical perspective but 1 Peter 3:18 provides insight into this command. Peter charges us to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ".

Being a 'Christian' is not a box to check or a list of rules to follow. Jesus desires for us to see Him in our day to day. God sent the Holy Spirit to be our advocate, someone to help us grow into a deeper knowledge of Jesus as we experience the highs and lows of life. Consider the scripture that we read this week along with the whole Discipleship Journey from this semester. God's character isn't to condemn you or box you into following a bunch of rules until Christ returns. From now until Jesus returns, consistently throughout scripture, we see that God longs for us to seek after the goodness that He has for us. As His children we are called to wait well; to grow in grace and knowledge of Jesus until He returns to fulfill His promise of eternal life.

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## WEEK 16 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How have you experienced 1st and 2nd Peter change your relationship with God?
2. After reading this passage, how can you wait well between now and Jesus' return?
3. In what ways did 1st and 2nd Peter challenge your perspective on growing in relationship with Jesus?
4. How did the Holy Spirit speak to you throughout this season of the Discipleship Journey?

# Meet Our Authors

*Brian  
Han cher*

In addition to things he's done at Beach, Brian has been active in the American Legion for over 15 years and currently serves as a chaplain at the local and district levels. At home he enjoys cooking and playing the harmonica.

*Kati Anne  
Vickers*

Kati Anne is one of the discipleship coordinators at Beach Church. She's been in ministry for 3 years now and finds joy in caring for others. Soon she will be graduating with her Bachelor's degree and plans to pursue a Masters in counseling.

*Hannah Fry*

Hannah Rowen Fry is a writer and speaker passionate about helping people live into their God-purpose. Her thoughtful reflections on Scripture invite those who feel overwhelmed to slow down, choose simplicity, and experience greater joy in the present moment.

*Kayley  
Schitema*

Kayley is a Communications Project Coordinator at Beach Church. She went to Michigan State University to pursue cheerleading and a degree in sports marketing. She loves running and being outside in the sun.

*Paul Pinkham*

Paul came to Jacksonville as a newspaper reporter in 1990 and now works as an investigator for the Federal Defender's Office. He and his beloved wife Beth recently celebrated their 20th wedding anniversary and live in Baymeadows with their dog Miles.

*Teré Bowman*

Teré Bowman is a working college student directing at a local Chick-fil-A while serving at Beach Church. He has a passion to see ministry abound in life and loves investing in businesses. He will soon graduate with a Bachelor's degree in Applied Ministry with a minor in Business Leadership.

*Heidi Simpson*

Heidi has been a member of the Beach Church community since 2020, where she is passionate about guiding and encouraging others in their faith journey. Driven by her curiosity and love for people and cultures, she pursued a degree in Social Sciences at Portland State University. Beyond her involvement with Beach Church, Heidi devotes her time to serving the Beach community, and assisting colleagues in their professional growth in a Human Resource capacity.