

A central black rectangular box is set against a yellow background with a white grid pattern. The box is surrounded by thick, black, hand-drawn style scribbles that radiate outwards from the center.

RESTLESS

STUDY

BECAUSE YOU WERE
MADE FOR MORE

JENNIE ALLEN

Author of *Anything* and the Bible Studies *Stuck* and *Chase*

RESTLESS

STUDY

B E C A U S E Y O U W E R E
M A D E F O R M O R E

J E N N I E A L L E N



W PUBLISHING GROUP

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INSTRUCTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO GET OUT OF
THIS STUDY?

GET HONEST

This is going to get personal, but it will be worth it. We will be dealing with the very things that make you, you. God wants to do something with those things. But until we recognize that we are made to run a race all our own, we will miss what he has for us. If you consider yourself restless, perhaps you would be willing to consider a way out, even if it is costly. Be honest with yourself and honest with God. He knows all of it anyway.

ENGAGE WITH YOUR SMALL GROUP

An important part of personal growth is community. We are going to deal with the way we view God and how we are to spend our lives individually for him. You may even need time outside of this small group to process with others your passions and gifts and purpose. Be intentional to pursue deeper conversations with others through this process.

And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

JOHN 8:32 NKJV

COMMIT TO BEING CONSISTENT AND PRESENT

Commit to being present at your group meetings, barring an emergency, and arrange your schedule so you do not miss any part in this journey. Have your lesson and projects finished when you come to the group meeting (except for this first one, of course).

GROUND RULES FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

BE CONCISE.

Share your answers to the questions while protecting others' time for sharing. Be thoughtful. Don't be afraid to share with the group, but try not to dominate the conversation.

Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak.

JAMES 1:19 ESV

KEEP GROUP MEMBERS' STORIES CONFIDENTIAL.

Many things your group members share are things they are choosing to share with you, not with your husband or other friends. Protect each other by not allowing anything shared in the group to leave the group.

RELY ON SCRIPTURE FOR TRUTH.

We are prone to use conventional, worldly wisdom as truth. While there is value in that, this is not the place. If you feel led to respond, please only respond with God's truth and Word, not "advice."

NO COUNSELING.

Protect the group by not directing all attention on solving one person's problem. This is the place for confessing and discovery and applying truth together as a group. Your group leader will be able to direct you to more help outside the group time if you need it. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

STUDY DESIGN

In the first meeting, your groups' study guides will be passed out and you will work through the Getting Started lesson together. After that, each lesson in the study guide is meant to be completed on your own during the week before coming to the group meeting. These lessons may feel different from studies you have done in the past. They are very interactive. The beginning of each lesson will involve you, your Bible, and a pen, working through Scripture and listening to God's voice. Each lesson will conclude with four projects you can do to help you further process how to live God's Word.

Don't feel as if each lesson has to be finished in one sitting; take a few blocks of time throughout the week if you need to. The goal of this study is to dig deeply into Scripture and uncover how it applies to your life, to deeply engage the mind and the heart. Projects, stories, and Bible study all play a role in it. You may be drawing or journaling or interacting with the homeless. At each group meeting you will discuss your experience in working through that week's lesson.

TERRIFIC RESOURCES FOR FURTHER PERSONAL STUDY

www.biblegateway.com

WHO IS JOSEPH, AND WHY DOES HE MATTER?

WHO WAS JOSEPH IN HISTORY?

- :: Joseph was the eleventh son of Jacob (father of the twelve tribes of Israel) and his mother was Rachel.
- :: From an early age, Joseph had dreams and revelations from God. He specifically dreamed that his brothers and parents would all bow down to him one day.
- :: Joseph was hated by his ten older brothers, and they sold him into slavery.
- :: Joseph served as a servant in the house of Potiphar.
- :: Joseph was unjustly imprisoned when Potiphar's wife reported him for rape.
- :: With God's revelation to Joseph through dreams, he went on to help Pharaoh lead Egypt out of a great famine and was given tremendous authority, second only to Pharaoh himself.

WHO IS JOSEPH IN SCRIPTURE?

- :: Joseph's story threads through Genesis 37–50.
- :: Joseph serves as a prototype of Christ.
- :: Joseph serves as the biggest link between the patriarchs of Israel (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) and Moses and the prophets.

WHO IS JOSEPH IN GOD'S PLAN?

- :: Joseph reveals God's character.
- :: His story shows how God provided for his people far in advance of their need. It's an inspiration and encouragement to our faith and prayers.
- :: His story shows how God can work our disobedience as well as our obedience to accomplish his purposes.
- :: The favor of God on Joseph's life displays what it means to be called by God for a specific purpose.
- :: His life shows how God is sovereign over good and evil, blessing and famine.

HOW DOES JOSEPH'S LIFE ULTIMATELY POINT TO CHRIST?

- :: Joseph's obedience through difficulty results in the preservation of the future nation of Israel and the line of Christ. This is both a means to Christ and a picture of Christ.
- :: The events of Joseph's life foreshadow the role and ministry of Jesus.
- :: The pictures of redemption, forgiveness, and reconciliation all foreshadow the work of Christ on our behalf despite our rebellion.

GETTING STARTED :: RESTLESS



Because you were made for more.

Something in me is restless, and I know I'm not alone. I think we are all aching for some magical great noble purpose to squeeze into the holes of our ordinary lives.

We are numb.

We are bored.

And yet, every once in a while our hearts race just a little. Not like when we were kids and we heard the words *Disney World*. Not even as intensely as when we heard the ice-cream truck. But every once in a while they quicken.

Why such a restlessness for purpose?

Because it is possible to waste our lives.

These words haunt me and point to one of the greatest fears of mankind. We aren't sure we matter. We live *with* lots of things and lots of people, but do we live *for* something?

We all desperately want to live for something. We die a little inside when we think we aren't living for something, and are ready to die when we think we can't. But that purpose feels slippery sometimes. We glance over at people functioning in their gifts and God is using them in big ways, and we want that. But it can feel so far away.

There is a beautiful verse in the Bible hidden away in Acts, describing the end of David's life: "When David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep" (13:36).

King David was a man after God's heart who lived a passionate mess of a life, but he sought after God and God's will. God used him to change the history of the world. This verse has two truths that make me tremble:

1. God has a unique purpose for each of us in our generation.
2. We have the choice to live that purpose or not.

I want to serve the purpose of God in my generation before I fall asleep.

I am calling you to the same. If we as a generation full of individuals serve the purposes of God on this earth, we could see our unwasted lives move together and change eternity.

I want to attempt something here together: to dream.

First, let's assume that if we are breathing, we have a specific purpose for being here. Every one of us with breath in our lungs still has something left to do.

I want to dream of what those purposes may be.

I wish I could promise magical moments with angels scripting visions in the sky just for you. I wish I could promise that at the end of this study, you would never feel empty, numb, or bored again. I can't.

But if you go here with me, the drum beat I hear in the distance, the one that makes my heart move faster—you will hear it. And maybe if we all hear and respond, we will see God move. We will know why we are here, why we are alive, what we are to do as a generation, and what we are to do as individuals.

So I am going to ask you to join me in a very uncomfortable process during this study. I want you to dare to believe that God has a vision for how you are to spend your life here. Because finding and accomplishing this vision is quite possibly the greatest responsibility we have as a generation, second only to knowing and loving God.

WE WERE DESIGNED TO DREAM

Genesis 1 tells of God creating the world and creating mankind.

Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over . . . all the creatures that move along the ground” (verse 26).

So after several days of creating something out of nothing, God created people to reflect his glory, nature, and character on this earth. To lead, create, care, and love.

God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it” (verse 28).

God created man in his image for a purpose. In the beginning only two jobs were ascribed to man:

1. Fill the earth with image bearers.
2. Make the world better: take chaos and give it order.

When we were born, we were given certain resources. Now we are to take whatever we are given and use it to reflect God and to serve people during our short time on earth. That's why we were given abilities above animals—to create, build, serve, lead, envision, and get after it. We have the unique talent of being able to see a need, and then create a way to meet that need. In that way, we reflect God.

WE ARE CALLED TO DREAM

Through the prophet Joel, God said this of the future: “I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions” (Joel 2:28).

This day has happened. It’s here.

The Holy Spirit flooded the earth at Pentecost. Immediately after, Peter reminded the apostles of the promise of that day: “No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ‘In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams’” (Acts 2:16–17).

Why? So that “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Acts 2:21).

You see, our creative God has an infinite number of creative plans to make himself known through us in unique and beautiful ways.

WE MUST DREAM

Dream. It seems a luxurious word, existing for the free and wealthy. It's a word my friend FeeFee tears up when she hears.

FeeFee lives in rural Haiti, in a tiny mortar house, with her three young children and a husband. Every day she builds a fire and pops popcorn to sell for five cents a bag outside their little home to help pay for her kids' schooling. Her husband, August, lays brick every day he can find work. She and her husband survive. But do they have the luxury of dreaming?

They lay bricks and pop popcorn, and sometimes when their children sit down for dinner FeeFee can only offer them leftover popcorn. But FeeFee tears up at the word *dream* because she lives closely attached to one. She dreams that her children would have a better life than she has—a life without popcorn meals.

If you are reading this book, you likely have the luxurious obligation to dream. We live at a time in history that affords us something that many have died for: the freedom and opportunity to dream and accomplish those dreams.

Most of us are not engaged in a home-turf war. We are not looking for food in trash cans. We are not slaves without rights. We are not simply surviving physically, as many, possibly even most generations before us have.

We possess the right, the power, and the resources to dream, and we take it for granted. We numb out and miss that we hold more resources than nearly any generation has before us. With our freedom, with our comfort, with our security, we get to dream. We get to build. We get to hope. We get to change. We get to influence. We get to respond.

It is a glorious luxury, and our greatest responsibility.

FOUR STARTING PLACES

We all come into this process from a different place, and all of us will need different things during it. This road will be unique to every single person. There are, however, a few different places that may describe just where you are. Can you see yourself in any of them?

COMFORTABLE

You don't know if you are living on purpose or not. You are busy, surviving, and somewhat content. Sometimes you may be bored, but in general your life is full, and you aren't one to overanalyze. Maybe you are beginning to wake up and hurt for more, but even that concept just made you nervous.

Questions you may be asking:

- :: “Shouldn’t I just feel thankful for what I have instead of wanting more?”
- :: “What is wrong with being comfortable and happy?”
- :: “Shouldn’t I just be faithful where I am?”

To you, I would say this: “There is a time for everything . . . a time to search and a time to give up . . . a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak,” and on and on (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 6–7).

This may be your time to tear up and your time to search and speak and consider. For a short season I want you to consider that there may be more. Because I would rather you be unsettled for a minute and sure that you are in the will of God, than content in the wrong place.

THIRSTY

You hurt. Inside you are longing for more. You are begging for more purpose than you currently feel. But you don’t know if your restless heart is your enemy—making you unsettled—or your friend—pushing you toward more. You are not satisfied, but you don’t know what to do about it. You are asking yourself: “Is there more? And if there is, how do I find it?”

Questions you may be asking:

- :: “Is it wrong to want more?”
- :: “Does God have some secret purpose and I am just missing it?”
- :: “What if there is no clear direction? What then?”

The apostle Paul wrote from prison, “I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received” (Ephesians 4:1).

There remained a restlessness in Paul throughout his life. He urgently went about the work of God and asked us to do the same. I don’t know if your restless heart is sinful or from God. But I do know that God often awakens and moves me toward more by using a deep discontentment and a unsettling feeling of dissatisfaction. Many times when I longed for more, sure enough, he had more for me. We will deal with all of these questions, so don’t preach away that restlessness yet.

RUNNING FREE

Some of you are living it. You feel purpose. You are running full speed ahead in obedience, and you have watched God move around you. You know what you are made to do, and perhaps you are already doing it. You have already moved through a season of feeling numb or satisfied and have become thirsty and found more. Life is full and hard but rich and fulfilling too.

Questions you may be asking:

- :: “Do I even need this? I already know the answer to a lot of these questions. Why should I do this study?”

Some of my most on-target friends have needed this study more than anyone else because we all forget.

Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith . . . so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

HEBREWS 12:1–3

I have been in all of these places over and over again and you will too. We start running the race we were meant to run, and then we realize after mile five that we have accidentally signed up for a marathon. And before we know it, we are bored or restless all over again. Let this study hand you water on your run. Let this process fill you with new strength and focus, and remind you afresh of your calling so that you will keep running and not grow weary. We are not home yet, and I pray this time will help you persevere in your race.

AT THE STARTING LINE

Or maybe you've realized that you don't really know God, that you don't actually have a personal relationship with him, where you talk every day and you look to him and live for him. If that's the case, then before you go any further, read the "How to Find God" page in the back of this book. It'll be the best, most important thing you'll ever do.

RESPOND

Take a minute alone and pray before you move ahead. Then take a few minutes before God and write out your answers to the questions below. After you are done, come back together in your small group and discuss.

Which of the stages described above do you most relate to right now?

When was the last time you dreamt about doing something specific in your life?

Are you coming into this study with any hurt and disappointment regarding your dreams? If so, describe it.

When you were a kid, what did you think you would be when you grew up? Why did you want to be that?

What stops you from running full steam ahead? From dreaming? From obeying? Respond to these questions in relation to each category below.

Physical (examples: time, energy, finances, responsibilities, health)

Emotional (examples: depression, fear, insecurity)

Relational (examples: tension, hurt from childhood, discouragement)

Spiritual (examples: belief, motives, strongholds, sin, shame)

When you anticipate having the freedom to dream, what are you afraid of that keeps you from doing it right now?

Do you feel discontent right now? If so, how does that discontentment tie into a desire for purpose?

In light of all of this, what do you most hope to get out of this time?

THE LIFE OF JOSEPH

Every one of us has been given a unique story and unique resources, people, and gifts. We have each been put in specific places in which we are to build the continuing story of God. Apart from the person of Christ in Scripture, no one else demonstrates that like Joseph. So we will follow the journey of a man who was chosen by God for a specific task, but who felt like he was wandering for most of his life. But all the while, God was turning Joseph into a man who could ultimately fulfill God's purposes.

There were some things that Joseph understood about this, and there were more that he didn't. But he ran headfirst into the story that God had prepared for him. His life was used to create, build, and serve purposes that would last forever. Faith marked Joseph's imperfect life, and while he faced mundane days and days that were unthinkably tragic, he completed the work that God had for him before he died.

I want that. There is joy in being in the will of God, and used by him for great purposes. There is peace there, even when God's will feels mundane or difficult. So we will watch this man live faith in front of us. And while we watch, we will look at our own lives.

OUR THREADS

Just as we see the threads of God's purpose weaving through Joseph's life, our goal here is to lay out the threads already running through our own lives. When we see how they begin to weave together, we better understand ourselves. We're freer to dream intentionally about how to use our lives to bring God glory.

WHAT IS THIS STUDY ALL ABOUT?

This process will help you uncover the unique ways you have been built, the stories that have been given to you, the passions in your soul, the people in your path, the places you are to be, and the purposes the Holy Spirit is calling you toward.

This study is a chance to lay out what you have—what you know—and offer it to God. I should mention that we have no way of knowing what he will say to do with all this, but we begin by laying it out and handing it over.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Without some effort, we will waste our minutes, our days . . . our lives.
So putting thought into spending our time and resources for the glory of
God may be the most important thing we can do.

Think of it this way:

God's story + my materials + need + the Holy Spirit = my purpose

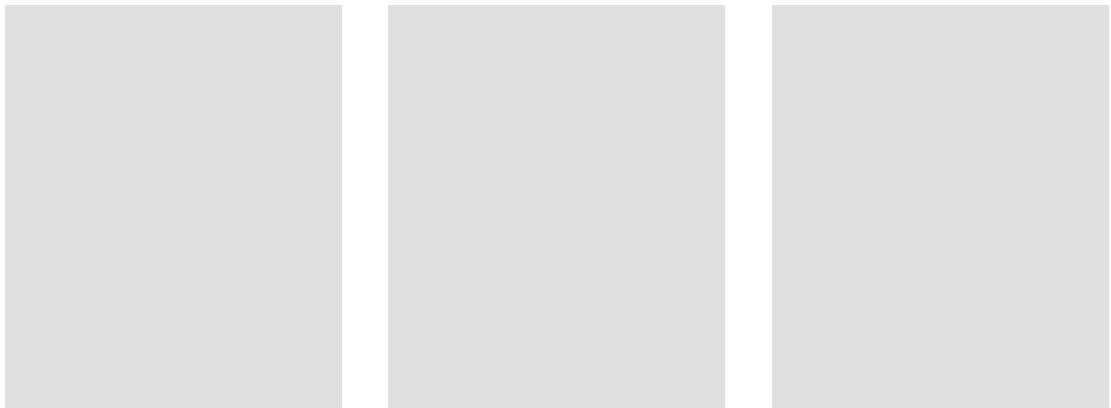
Or, to be more specific,

The story of God through Scripture
+
An understanding of myself and my resources
+
Taking inventory of the need around me
+
The mystery of following the Holy Spirit's leading
=
Obediently living my purpose

Your threads will serve as a:

- :: catalyst to move you to action;
- :: filter for opportunities as they present themselves;
- :: compass to direct you toward God's purposes for you.

As you begin this journey consider the three things holding you back from dreaming. (For example, need for approval, lack of resources, fear.)



Take some time alone this week, laying down each of these fears and barriers and asking God to reveal visions of how your life may be used for his purposes in these weeks together.

NOTES

GOD'S STORY :: 1



GOD'S STORY

*The place where your restless soul meets God is the
place where nothing ever feels small again.*

My son Cooper was born and lived three and a half years of his life in Africa. He is five now and is wrestling with the fact that his skin color is a few—strike that—*many* shades darker than the rest of his family's. He keeps running his hand up and down my arm and asking me, “Where can we go, so I can get skin like this?”

He's not speaking with knowledge of the painful history of his skin color in our country yet. Right now he just wants to be like his family. His identity is unique in our family. He has a heritage that each of us appreciates deeply, but we do not share it. So he quietly asks me as we lay in bed before prayers:

“Why did God make me born in Africa?”

“Why did God put me in another mommy's tummy?”

“Why did God make me?”

I can't deny that the answers to many of my son's questions are painful. Abandonment usually undergirds the beautiful tragedy of adoption. Even though he finds himself in a loving family now, we can never make that painful truth go away.

It's usually dark as we lay in bed to pray and talk. Cooper doesn't know that every time he asks me these questions, I have tears running down my face as I preach my guts out in his bottom bunk:

“Not one part of you is by accident, Cooper. God made you and placed you in your African mama's tummy. He knew even then that I would be

your forever mama and we would be your forever family. We were made for you and you were made for us.

“Cooper, you were made to show the world God. Everything that God gives you, your Africa, your America, your dark skin and your strong legs, your hurts, your words, your blessings, your smart mind . . . everything you have is to use for God while you are here.

“And God will show you how. Soon we will be in heaven with God forever, but while we are here now, we have to use all we have for God.”

My five-year-old needs to know his life was on purpose and for a purpose. He wants to know he wasn’t an accident. I can’t take away the pain of his story, but I can tell him there is purpose. We all want to know we are not accidents. We all want to know our stories are going somewhere on purpose.

Something deep down inside us is made to live for a story bigger than ourselves—the story of the one who made us. Any other version of this story will consistently feel shallow and empty.

He has also set eternity in the hearts of men.

ECCLESIASTES 3:11 NIV 1984

Cooper will never make sense of his life until he understands that eternal story, and the God who made him and placed him in his spot. It's a big earth, and when Cooper studies it, he sees countries separated by a huge ocean and he feels lost and small in it.

I think a lot of us feel lost and small.

And because of that we desperately want to find “God’s will for me.” We want to know that we exist on purpose and for a purpose. We often try to find “God’s will for me” without simply first understanding God’s will. But we will only ever discover his will for us within God’s will for this earth, for eternity, and for his people. We were made for this story—his story. And yes, he wrote little parts for each of us in his story. Or else we wouldn’t exist.

STUDY ...

Read Hebrews 10:36–12:3

RESPOND

In your own words summarize the story of God's work on earth as told in Hebrews 10:36–12:3.

What was the most defining thing about these men and women?

Define faith. (Hebrews 11:1)

STUDY

In what different ways did the people in those verses live out their faith?

Describe the actions of someone without faith.
(Hebrews 10:38–39)

Describe some of the things that happen because of faith in these lives. (Hebrews 11)

The author of Hebrews has a goal for the readers. He wants them to understand the history of God on earth for a reason. What is his goal in sharing this history of faith? (Hebrews 12:1–3)

What do you think was the main thing God was accomplishing on earth through these generations of people?

WHAT IS GOD AFTER?

My little Cooper, Rahab, Oprah, Abraham Lincoln, Alexander the Great, and every other single human on the face of the earth has found his or her story in the confines of God's story. The history of the world fits in a small crevice of the history of God. And throughout that history, God is after one great purpose. And every one of our unique callings will fit into this one.

STUDY

God is most after his glory.

Glory is the visible expression of God's character on this earth.

So just as Abraham in faith followed God into the wilderness, bringing God glory, when you bravely obey or sacrifice or risk in faith to follow God, you bring him glory.

God's chief pursuit is that his glory, through us, would fill the earth. Everyone of our unique callings will display hints of the glory of our God.

THE PROBLEM

We ache to be a part of something great, and it makes us nervous at the same time. We were built for this, but we all fight hundreds of mixed motives and fears.

Jesus said of us, "Whoever believes in me . . . they will do even greater things than these" (John 14:12). It almost sounds blasphemous to do even greater things than Jesus. We rarely say it, but often when we start to have great thoughts or visions, we quickly dismiss them, afraid that we may become arrogant or prideful. Or much worse, simply that we would *appear* prideful.

* * *

God gave man two commands: be fruitful and fill the earth. He kept repeating this phrase in history in a beautiful effort to fill the earth with his image through us—an earth full of the glory of God.

Instead of filling the earth with God's glory, humans they came together to build a tower and to make a name for themselves (Genesis 11). John Piper says of this tower and of our souls, "Man was made to rely on God and give him glory. Instead man chose to rely on himself and seek his own glory—to make a name for himself."¹

We all will have to fight this. Perhaps it is the biggest hurdle we must cross to living our purposes. At the base of our souls, are we building for God or us?

Take just a minute and pray. Ask God to reveal your motives.

What is the driving force of your life?

1. John Piper, "God Created Us for His Glory," Desiring God (blog), July 27, 1980.
www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/sermons/god-created-us-for-his-glory.

STUDY

Whatever you just wrote, within this great story, God provided the remedy to our souls. To overcome us, God would make a great sacrifice.

[Christ] is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

HEBREWS 1:3 ESV

Christ in us would be the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27). For the joy set before him, he endured the cross. It is a joy that we share. The joy of a forever with a God who is entirely good and who chose us to become his children. The whole earth will be full of his glory; evil will be crushed. Until then we run, showing God to the world and not growing weary.

This history of faith we read about in Hebrews is there because God wants us to see we have a part in his story. He wants us to live motivated by faith in the unseen, and to run.

So we fight the desire to build our own towers. When we do the great things he prepared in advance for us to do (Ephesians 2:10), but we do them in and through and for the name and glory of God.

GREATER THINGS

We were made to do great things, but we cannot live with motives unchecked. If our motives are the glory of God, we have tremendous freedom to dream with hearts that are completely his.

I want to have a faith that God can move through.

I want Cooper to understand he isn't just made for a purpose; he was placed in this time and space for the greatest imaginable purpose. He will show God to a world that doesn't know him, in his beautiful and unique way. He will bring light to darkness. He will assemble the pieces of his life not into a tower for his name that would only crumble, but he will assemble them for the name and glory of the one God Almighty.

Well, he's five, and currently we are working on not throwing rocks, but that's the hope. That's the prayer. That's the sermon he's going to keep hearing.

Our hearts must be completely his before we can start to dream.

For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.

2 CHRONICLES 16:9 NASB

JOHN 17

JESUS PRAYS TO BE GLORIFIED

After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

JESUS PRAYS FOR HIS DISCIPLES

“I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

“I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within

them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

JESUS PRAYS FOR ALL BELIEVERS

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

“Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

STUDY

WHO ARE YOU, LORD?



WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR ME?

REFLECT

[Christ] is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature . . .

HEBREWS 1:3 ESV

If Christ is the exact imprint of God's nature, use the chart below and on the next page to describe how Christ reacted to each thing listed, using your knowledge of Christ's story and the Bible verses you just read for guidance. In the far-right column, write a few descriptive words about what those actions tell us about God's nature.

| | CHRIST'S ACTION TOWARD . . . | GOD'S NATURE |
|---------------|---|-------------------|
| Temptation | he fought it and was victorious over it (see Mark 1:13) | persevering, holy |
| Religiousness | | |
| Sinners | | |

PROJECT :: 1

| | | |
|-------------|--|--|
| Sickness | | |
| | | |
| Forgiveness | | |
| | | |
| The devil | | |
| | | |
| This life | | |
| | | |
| Heaven | | |
| | | |
| Money | | |
| | | |

IMAGINE

Draw an image of the glory of God. This is an impossibly abstract assignment. But I think sometimes we never analyze abstract concepts like glory. What does it remind you of? What image comes to mind? What would it look like if we all displayed God's glory here? Use your imagination.

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.

HABAKKUK 2:14

DEAL

[God] will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.

1 CORINTHIANS 4:5

What are some of the mixed motives you need to deal with?

Have your motives ever stopped you from doing something you wanted to do for God? If so, what were those dreams?

Has your fear of *appearing* arrogant every held you back? If so describe it.

We have a lot of freedom to dream, but there is not freedom in our motives. The hidden parts of us are the very most important to God. Two people can accomplish the same thing with different motives and one will please God and one won't. If you realize that you are doing a good thing for a not-so-good purpose, don't despair. Dedicate it to God right now and ask him to commandeer it for his glory.

CONSIDER

Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

HEBREWS 11:1

How confident are you that the story of God is real? Explain your answer, and how it affects your life.

How confident are you that Jesus is your savior? Explain your answer, and how that confidence or absence of it affects your life.

How confident are you that God has specific purposes for you in his story? Explain. What difference has that made to you?

Talk about it.

I'll be honest. I have given my life to God's story, and there are still days I wonder if it is all real. It's okay if you waver sometimes. God holds us in place with him; we don't hold ourselves. Where your faith is weak, pray and ask him for more. "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24).

CONCLUSION

I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do.

JOHN 17:4

Jesus said this before he died.

I want to say that before I die too.

I recently lay in my hotel room listening as Larry King interviewed Daniel Radcliffe about the final Harry Potter movie. Daniel said a beautiful thing about his role in these epic films. “I always knew that anyone who was given this role would have the same fame. It was never about me. It was about this franchise. I was simply a part of something bigger.”²

I teared up when I heard it. I had spent the day meeting and greeting important people in the book world, in some small ways trying to become important.

2. *Larry King Live*, July 10, 2011, CNN.

And after a day of trying to become important, my heart broke as I realized I was only a small part of an epic story—the very most successful franchise that ever was. And anyone could play my part. I was reading lines of a story written before creation, and I was but a breath, playing my tiny part in it. It would never be me that was important. I would simply play the part that was given to me.

Isaiah 40 describes the enormity of a God who sits above the circle of the earth; its inhabitants are like grass to him. “All people are like grass, and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field” (v. 6). It is not that we are insignificant. Rather, he is so significant that comparatively, we are but a breath.

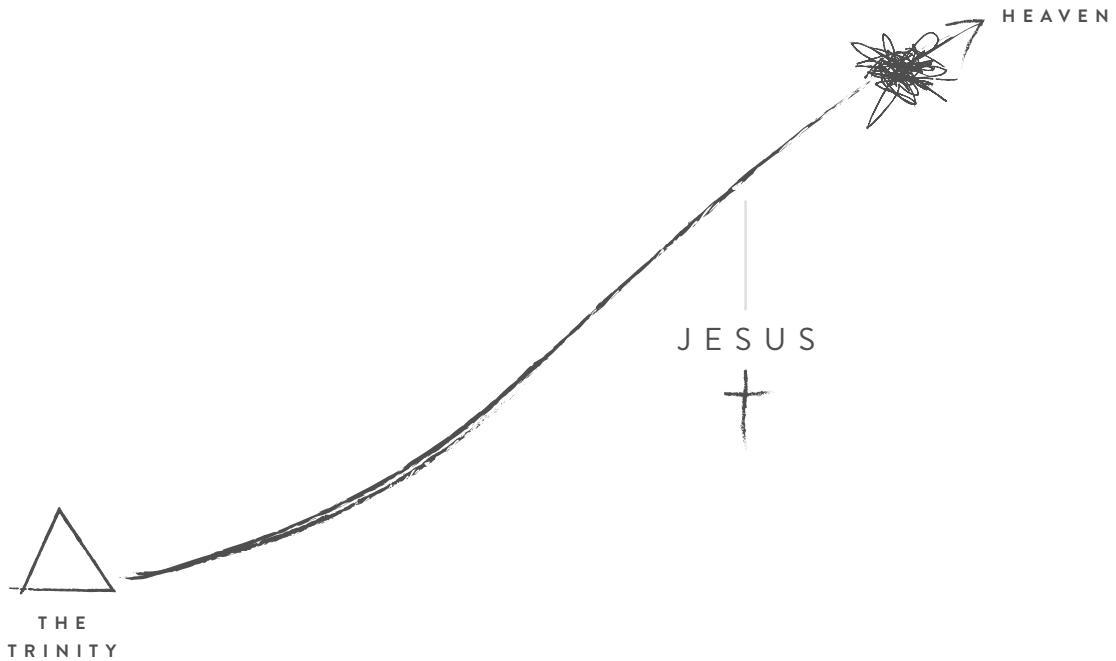
He breathes in and out, and a generation has already passed away.

I have lived a lot of my life on the back row fearing that if I dream or live great dreams I may steal glory from God. Who am I to even think such a thing? As my friend Christine Caine says, “Who am I to dare think, that on my very best day, I could ever take one little piece of the glory of God?”

So instead of fearing or craving greatness, crave God and run your guts out.

NOTES

The arrow below represents God's story, beginning with the Trinity and creation, and ending (at least from your viewpoint) when you meet him in heaven. Based on the scriptures we've studied and your own experience of the Bible, fill in more key points on the time line of the story of God. Or fill it with notes from the video talk.



NOTES