Jesus came announcing that there was a way of living, a way of being in the world, that was available to us right now. The kingdom of God has come near! We don’t have to wait until after we die to experience eternal life; we can experience a life that is truly life today! How? By responding to Jesus’ invitation to “follow me.” Jesus invites us to be his apprentices in living. He wants to guide us in living a life that is truly life.

This five-week journaling experience will help you reflect on what it means to say “Yes!” to Jesus’ invitation.
“...Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ‘The time has come,’ he said. ‘The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!’” - Mark 1:14-15

Jesus came announcing that there was a way of living, a way of being in the world, that was available to us right now. The kingdom of God has come near! We don’t have to wait until after we die to experience eternal life, we can experience a life that is truly life today! How? By responding to Jesus’ invitation to “follow me.” Jesus invites us to be his apprentices in living. He wants to guide us in living a life that is truly life.

This five-week journaling experience will help you reflect on what it means to say “Yes!” to Jesus’ invitation. Each week contains five days of journaling. After reading the Scripture and insight for the day, take time to consider one or both of the reflection questions.

We encourage you to write out your response to the questions in the space provided. It can be even more powerful to address your responses to God. Share your thoughts, your questions, your convictions, and your concerns with him. Let this experience be a time when you converse with him through writing. Pay attention to how his Holy Spirit guides your thoughts and your pen.

You might just find that This Changes Everything!
Jesus gives us a picture of an eternal life that starts right now.

“After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ‘The time has come,’ he said. ‘The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!’” - Mark 1:14-15

“Jesus’ good news–his gospel–is simply this: the Kingdom of God has now, through Jesus, become available for ordinary human beings to live in. It’s here. Now. You can live in it if you want… This is Jesus’ gospel: God is present here and now. God is acting. You can revise your plans for living around this cosmic opportunity to daily experience God’s favor and power. Some people teach that the only real reason Jesus came to earth was to die on a cross. But death on the cross was only one part of his mission. His overall mission was to be the Kingdom bringer… He invites you, as a gracious gift, to become an agent of the Kingdom–to experience God’s reign in your own life, body, and will and then to become a conduit of God’s power, joy, and love to bruised and bleeding humanity all around you.” - John Ortberg, Eternity is Now in Session

Have you tended to view eternal life in the Kingdom of God as a future reality for after you die or as a present reality you can experience right now? How might understanding that life in the Kingdom of God is available to you right now impact your daily life?
WEEK 1
DAY 2

BIG IDEA
Jesus gives us a picture of an eternal life that starts right now.

SCRIPTURE
“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.” - Matthew 13:44-46

INSIGHT
“The gospel of the kingdom isn’t a pleasant religious idea that you might like to explore some time when you’ve got an hour or two to spare. It isn’t like an attractive object in a museum that you might visit and look at admiringly the next time you’re in the district. It’s like a fabulous hoard of treasure, yours for the taking—if you’ll sell everything else to buy the field where it’s hidden. It’s like the biggest, finest, purest pearl that any jeweller ever imagined, and it’s yours for the taking—if you’ll sell everything else, including all the other pearls you’ve ever owned, in order to purchase it...There is only one great pearl; there is only one hoard of treasure; and everything else is nothing beside it. The pearl, the treasure, is the gospel of the kingdom which Jesus was announcing and embodying.” - N.T. Wright, Matthew for Everyone Part 1

REFLECTION
- Is there anything in your life you are valuing more than the life offered you in the Kingdom of God?
- What would it look like for you to go “all in” with Jesus?
WEEK 1
DAY 3

BIG IDEA

Jesus gives us a picture of an eternal life that starts right now.

SCRIPTURE

“Again he said, ‘What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.’”
- Mark 4:30-32

INSIGHT

“While I am looking for something large, bright, and unmistakably holy, God slips something small, dark, and apparently negligible in my pocket. How many other treasures have I walked right by because they did not meet my standards? At least one of the day’s lessons is about learning to let go of my bright ideas about God so that my eyes are open to the God who is.”
- Barbara Brown Taylor, Learning to Walk in the Dark

REFLECTION

> Where is God at work in your life that you might be overlooking?
> How could you keep your eyes open for “mustard-seed-size” signs of the Kingdom of God today?
BIG IDEA

Jesus gives us a picture of an eternal life that starts right now.

SCRIPTURE

“This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.’”
- Matthew 6:9-10

INSIGHT

“God’s own ‘kingdom,’ or ‘rule,’ is the range of his effective rule, where what he wants done is done… [God’s kingdom] has existed from the moment of creation and will never end. It cannot be ‘shaken.’ It has never been in trouble and never will be... We do have an invitation to be a part of it, but if we refuse we only hurt ourselves... Indeed, the social and political realm, along with the individual heart, is the only place in all of creation where the kingdom of God, or his effective will, is currently permitted to be absent. That realm is the ‘on earth’ of the Lord’s Prayer that is opposed to the ‘in heaven’ where God’s will is, simply, done. So when Jesus directs us to pray, ‘Thy kingdom come,’ he does not mean we should pray for it to come into existence. Rather, we pray for it to take over at all points in the personal, social, and political order where it is now excluded.” - Dallas Willard, The Divine Conspiracy

REFLECTION

> Where are the places in your own life where God’s will is not being done?
> What would it look like for the Kingdom of God to take over in those places?
BIG IDEA

Jesus gives us a picture of an eternal life that starts right now.

SCRIPTURE

“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.’” - John 17:1-3

INSIGHT

“The kind of ‘knowing God’ that is eternal life is an interactive relationship where I experience God’s presence and favor and power in my real life on this earth. To know God is to live in a rich, moment-by-moment, gratitude-soaked, participatory life together. To know God means to know myself as his beloved friend as a gift of grace. To know God means to know what Paul called ‘the power of his resurrection (Philippians 3:10) in the details and tasks and challenges of my daily, ordinary life. This is eternal life. It is not something far away in outer space that we can only hope to experience after we die. It is not simply being able to give the right answers at church, affirming the right doctrines, or achieving the minimum entrance requirements to cross over the bridge and get into heaven. On the contrary, it’s something much bigger and far more amazing. The gospel Jesus preached is the Good News that this eternal kind of life is available now.” - John Ortberg, Eternity is Now in Session

REFLECTION

> How would you describe your relationship with God?
> What do you long to experience in your relationship with God that you aren’t currently experiencing?
BIG IDEA
Jesus invites us to an eternal life that starts right now

SCRIPTURE
“After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ‘The time has come,’ he said. ‘The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!’ As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ‘Come, follow me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will send you out to fish for people.’ At once they left their nets and followed him. When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.”
- Mark 1:14-20

INSIGHT
“Do you know what never defines the word Christian? The Bible. Literally. It never calls anyone to become a Christian, and it never records anyone becoming a Christian. Even Jesus never uses the word Christian. Jesus never says, ‘Here’s how to become a Christian.’ Jesus never said, ‘Believe the right things about me, and I’ll let you into heaven after you die.’ His news was something far grander, more cosmic, more life-changing, more costly, more compelling, and more humbling than that... Jesus’ Good News is that eternal life—life with God and for God, life under God’s care and life by God’s power—is available now. If you want that life, the logical step is to become a disciple—a student, an apprentice, a follower—of Jesus... Christianity was never intended to produce Christians. Just disciples.” -John Ortberg, Eternity is Now in Session

REFLECTION
> How would you describe the difference between a Christian and a Disciple/Apprentice?
> Which term most accurately describes your life right now?
WEEK 2
DAY 2

BIG IDEA

Jesus invites us to an eternal life that starts right now

SCRIPTURE

“Then he said to them all: ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?’” - Luke 9:23-25

INSIGHT

“Costly grace is the gospel which must be sought again and again and again, the gift which must be asked for, the door at which a man must knock. Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is costly because it cost God the life of his Son: ‘Ye were bought at a price’, and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us. Above all, it is grace because God did not reckon his Son too dear a price to pay for our life, but delivered him up for us. Costly grace is the Incarnation of God.” - Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Cost of Discipleship

REFLECTION

> What might being an apprentice of Jesus cost you?
> What will you gain by choosing to follow Jesus?
BIG IDEA
Jesus invites us to an eternal life that starts right now

SCRIPTURE
“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.” - Colossians 3:23-24

INSIGHT
“A disciple is someone whose ultimate goal is to live their life the way Jesus would live if he were me… If [Jesus] were to come today as he did then, he could carry out his mission through most any decent and useful occupation. He could be a clerk or accountant in a hardware store, a computer repairman, a banker, an editor, doctor, waiter, teacher, farmhand, lab technician, or construction worker. He could run a housecleaning service or repair automobiles. In other words, if he were to come today he could very well do what you do. He could very well live in your apartment or house, hold down your job, have your education and life prospects, and live within your family surroundings, and time. None of this would be the least hindrance to the eternal kind of life that was his by nature and becomes available to us through him.” - Dallas Willard, The Divine Conspiracy

REFLECTION
> Whether you work in or outside your home, how would Jesus do your job today if he were you?
> How might it change your perspective of the responsibilities that lie before you today if you do them with and for Jesus?
BIG IDEA

Jesus invites us to an eternal life that starts right now

SCRIPTURE

“Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: ‘If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. ‘Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won’t you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, saying, “This person began to build and wasn’t able to finish.” … In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.’’” - Luke 14:25-30, 33

INSIGHT

“Imagine a politician standing on a soap-box addressing a crowd. ‘If you’re going to vote for me,’ he says, ‘you’re voting to lose your homes and families; you’re asking for higher taxes and lower wages; you’re deciding in favour of losing all you love best! So come on—who’s on my side?’ The crowd wouldn’t even bother heckling him, or throwing rotten tomatoes at him. They would just be puzzled. Why on earth would anyone try to advertise himself in that way? But isn’t that what Jesus is doing in this astonishing passage? ‘Want to be my disciple, do you? Well, in that case you have to learn to hate your family, give up your possessions, and get ready for a nasty death!’ Hardly the way, as we say, to win friends and influence people. But wait a minute. Supposing, instead of a politician, we think of the leader of a great expedition, forging a way through a high and dangerous mountain pass to bring urgent medical aid to villagers cut off from the rest of the world. ‘If you want to come any further,’ the leader says, ‘you’ll have to leave your packs behind. From here on the path is too steep to carry all that stuff. You probably won’t find it again. And you’d better send your last postcards home; this is a dangerous route and it’s very likely that several of
us won’t make it back.’ We can understand that. We may not like the sound of it, but we can see why it would make sense. And we can see, therefore, that Jesus is more like the second person than the first...when there is an urgent task to be done, as there now is, then everything else, including one’s own life, must be put at risk for the sake of the kingdom.” - NT Wright, *Luke for Everyone*

**REFLECTION**

> How is following Jesus like being part of a life-saving expedition?
> What are you willing to let go of in order to give yourself fully to Jesus and his mission?
Jesus invites us to an eternal life that starts right now

“"The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, ‘Follow me.’ Philip was from the town of Bethsaida. So were Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and told him, ‘We have found the one whom Moses wrote about in the Law. The prophets also wrote about him. He is Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.’ ‘Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?’ Nathanael asked. ‘Come and see,’ said Philip. Jesus saw Nathanael approaching. Here is what Jesus said about him. ‘He is a true Israelite. Nothing about him is false.’ ‘How do you know me?’ Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, ‘I saw you while you were still under the fig tree. I saw you there before Philip called you.’ Nathanael replied, ‘Rabbi, you are the Son of God. You are the king of Israel.’ Jesus said, ‘You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that.’ Then he said to the disciples, ‘What I’m about to tell you is true. You will see heaven open. You will see the angels of God going up and coming down on the Son of Man.’” - John 1:43-51

“Jesus launched the kingdom of God and by his words and actions he demonstrated what living as kingdom citizens would look like. He called others to follow him. His rescue mission wasn’t going to be a solo project. It would be carried on by his apprentices, his disciples. After Jesus was gone, the kingdom of God would be embodied by all those who said yes to his call to follow him. Some two millennia later, Jesus is still proclaiming and demonstrating the kingdom of God and Jesus is still sliding his invitation across the table to us. His invitation is as simple today as it always was. When we open the envelope and read the white card inside, it only has two words printed in a simple black font: Follow me.” -Derek Vreeland, btw: Getting Serious about Following Jesus
REFLECTION

What do you think Jesus is offering in his invitation to “Follow me”? 
How will you respond to Jesus’s invitation?
WEEK 3
DAY 1

BIG IDEA
An apprentice of Jesus chooses to be with Jesus.

SCRIPTURE
“As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?”
- Psalm 42:1-2

INSIGHT
“Life under, over, from, and for God each seeks to use God to achieve some other goal. God is seen as a means to an end. For example, life from God uses him to supply our material desires. Life over God uses him as the source of principles or laws. Life under God tries to manipulate God through obedience to secure blessings and avoid calamity. And life for God uses him and his mission to gain a sense of direction and purpose. But life with God is different because its goal is not to use God, its goal is God. He ceases to be a device we employ or a commodity we consume. Instead God himself becomes the focus of our desire.”
- Skye Jethani, With: Reimagining the Way You Relate to God

REFLECTION
> On a daily basis, how much do you desire to be with God?
> What would it look like for you to simply be with Jesus today?
WEEK 3  
DAY 2

BIG IDEA  
An apprentice of Jesus chooses to be with Jesus.

SCRIPTURE  
“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: ‘Everyone is looking for you!’” - Mark 1:35-37

INSIGHT  
“Solitude well practiced will break the power of busyness, haste, isolation, and loneliness. You will see that the world is not on your shoulders after all. Your will find yourself, and God will find you in new ways. Silence also brings Sabbath to you. It completes solitude, for without it you cannot be alone. Far from being a mere absence, silence allows the reality of God to stand in the midst of your life. God does not ordinarily compete for our attention. In silence we come to attend.” - Dallas Willard, The Great Omission

REFLECTION  
> How hard is it for you to practice silence and solitude?
> What do you think might happen in your life if you set aside time to regularly withdraw with Jesus?
**WEEK 3**

**DAY 3**

**BIG IDEA**

An apprentice of Jesus chooses to be with Jesus.

**SCRIPTURE**

“Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” - John 15:4-5

**INSIGHT**

“The way to learn [to abide in Jesus] is to exercise yourself in living in the present moment. Each time your attention is free to occupy itself with the thought of Jesus,—whether it be with time to think and pray, or only for a few passing seconds,—let your first thought be to say, Now, at this moment, I do abide in Jesus. Use such time, not in vain regrets that you have not been abiding fully, or still more hurtful fears that you will not be able to abide, but just at once take the position the Father has given you: ‘I am in Christ; this is the place God has given me. I accept it; here I rest; I do now abide in Jesus.’” - Andrew Murray, *Abide in Christ: A 30 Day Devotional*

**REFLECTION**

> How aware are you in the moments of your daily life that Jesus is with you?
> How could you continually turn your thoughts to him today?
BIG IDEA

An apprentice of Jesus chooses to be with Jesus.

SCRIPTURE

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.” - Colossians 3:1-4

INSIGHT

“The first and most basic thing we can and must do is to keep God before our minds...This is the fundamental secret of caring for our souls. Our part in thus practicing the presence of God is to direct and redirect our minds constantly to Him. In the early time of our ‘practicing’ we may well be challenged by our burdensome habits of dwelling on things less than God. But these are habits—not the law of gravity—and can be broken...a new grace-filled habit will replace the former ones as we take intentional steps toward keeping God before us. Soon our minds will return to God as the needle of a compass constantly returns to the north. If God is the great longing of our souls, He will become the pole star of our inward beings.” - Dallas Willard, The Great Omission

REFLECTION

> What earthly concerns do you need to set aside today in order to keep God before your mind?
> What difference do you think “setting your mind on things above” could make in your day?
WEEK 3
DAY 5

📍 BIG IDEA
An apprentice of Jesus chooses to be with Jesus.

📚 SCRIPTURE
“You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us? But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: ‘God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.’ Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.” - James 4:4-10

🔍 INSIGHT
“It is unlikely that we will deepen our relationship with God in a casual or haphazard manner. There will be a need for some intentional commitment and some reorganization in our own lives. But there is nothing that will enrich our lives more than a deeper and clearer perception of God’s presence in the routine of daily living.” - William Paulsell, Quoted in John Ortberg, The Life You’ve Always Wanted

📝 REFLECTION
> How does it make you feel to know that God is jealous for you?
> What will you do moving forward to draw near to God?
**BIG IDEA**
An apprentice of Jesus is committed to loving like Jesus.

**SCRIPTURE**
“Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons. These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter), James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means “sons of thunder”), Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.” - Mark 3:13-19

**INSIGHT**
“Part of the very essence of Christianity is to be together in a concrete community, with all the real human faults that are there and the tensions that this will bring us. Spirituality, for a Christian, can never be an individualistic quest, the pursuit of God outside of community, family, and church. The God of the incarnation tells us that anyone who says he or she loves an invisible God in heaven and is unwilling to deal with a visible neighbor on earth is a liar since no one can love a God who cannot be seen if he or she cannot love a neighbor who can be seen. Hence a Christian spirituality is always as much about dealing with each other as it is about dealing with God.” - Ronald Rolheiser, *The Holy Longing: The Search for a Christian Spirituality*

**REFLECTION**
- Who are the people you are including in your life in order to connect in a concrete community?
- How could you be more intentional about connecting in this community?
BIG IDEA
An apprentice of Jesus is committed to loving like Jesus.

SCRIPTURE
“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” - John 13:34-35

INSIGHT
“[Jesus] describes it as a ‘new commandment’. Love, of course, is central in many parts of the Old Testament. The book Leviticus (19.18) commanded the Israelites to love their neighbours as themselves. But the newness isn’t so much a matter of never having heard words like this before. It’s a matter of the mode of this love, the depth and type of this love: love one another in the same way that I have loved you. It has been hard for the disciples up to this point even to appreciate what Jesus has been doing on their behalf; now he’s telling them to copy him! As with the footwashing, they are to look back at his whole life, his whole way and manner of life, and to find in it a pattern, a shape, an example, a power. To wash someone else’s feet, you have to think of yourself as only a slave. [However that] can feed all the wrong kind of thinking: it can produce a sort of inverted pride, a pride at one’s own humility. But with love there’s no danger of that. Love is all about the other person. It overflows into service, not in order to show off how hard-working it is, but because that is its natural form. This is to be the badge that the Christian community wears before the watching world.”
- N.T. Wright, John for Everyone Part 2

REFLECTION
> What do you think it means to love people the way Jesus loved us?
> How could you love someone like Jesus loves today?
WEEK 4
DAY 3

BIG IDEA
An apprentice of Jesus is committed to loving like Jesus.

SCRIPTURE
“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.” - Colossians 3:12-15

INSIGHT
“Almost everyone finds their early days in a community ideal. It all seems perfect. They feel they are surrounded by saints, heroes, or at the least, most exceptional people who are everything they want to be themselves. And then comes the letdown. The greater their idealization of the community at the start, the greater the disenchantment. If people manage to get through this second period, they come to a third phase - that of realization and of true commitment. They no longer see other members of the community as saints or devils, but as people - each with a mixture of good and bad, darkness and light, each growing and each with their own hope. The community is neither heaven nor hell, but planted firmly on earth, and they are ready to walk in it, and with it. They accept the community and the other members as they are; they are confident that together they can grow towards something more beautiful.”
- Jean Vanier, Community and Growth

REFLECTION
> Who are you struggling to love with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience?
> What would it look like for you to “grow towards something more beautiful” with those you struggle to love?
An apprentice of Jesus is committed to loving like Jesus.

“As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector’s booth. ‘Follow me,’ he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him. While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew’s house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, ‘Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?’ On hearing this, Jesus said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: “I desire mercy, not sacrifice.” For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.’” - Matthew 9:9-13

“Those of us who call ourselves ‘Christians,’ who have defined ourselves by affirming right beliefs, often wrestle with having a reputation for exclusivity and judgmentalism, a spirit of us versus them, and a difficulty embracing the ‘other.’ However, one of the most striking aspects of Jesus’ approach to people was the way he treated those who were thought to be in the ‘out’ group. Yale theologian Miroslav Volf writes that one of the greatest differences between Jesus and the establishment religious leaders of his time was that they regarded exclusion of the moral or religious ‘other’ as a virtue, whereas Jesus regarded such exclusion as sin. He was strangely welcoming to people normally shunned. His followers learned, often slowly and painfully, to follow in this way.”

- John Ortberg, Eternity is Now in Session

Who do you tend to view as the “other” morally, politically, socially, economically, or religiously?

What would it look like to love these people the way Jesus loves them?
BIG IDEA
An apprentice of Jesus is committed to loving like Jesus.

SCRIPTURE
“So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.” - Ephesians 4:11-16

INSIGHT
“Spiritual formation occurs primarily in the context of community… Long-term interpersonal relationships are the crucible of genuine progress in the Christian life. People who stay grow. People who leave do not grow… It is a simple but profound biblical reality that we both grow and thrive together or we do not grow much at all.” - Christopher Smith and John Pattison, Slow Church

REFLECTION
> Who has helped you grow in your spiritual journey?
> How could you invest in the spiritual growth of others?
WEEK 5
DAY 1

🎯 BIG IDEA
An apprentice of Jesus is learning to live like Jesus.

📖 SCRIPTURE
“In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!” - Philippians 2:5-8

🔍 INSIGHT
“The Christian Gospel is that I am so flawed that Jesus had to die for me, yet I am so loved and valued that Jesus was glad to die for me. This leads to deep humility and deep confidence at the same time. It undermines both swaggering and sniveling. I cannot feel superior to anyone, and yet I have nothing to prove to anyone. I do not think more of myself nor less of myself. Instead, I think of myself less.” - Tim Keller, The Reason for God

📝 REFLECTION
> Describe what it looks like when a person reflects the deep humility and deep confidence of Jesus?
> What would it look like for you to think of yourself less today?
BIG IDEA
An apprentice of Jesus is learning to live like Jesus.

SCRIPTURE
“Jesus replied, ‘Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.’” - John 14:23-26

INSIGHT
“We live in what one writer has called the ‘age of sensation.’ We think that if we don’t feel something there can be no authenticity in doing it. But the wisdom of God says something different: that we can act ourselves into a new way of feeling much quicker than we can feel ourselves into a new way of acting. Worship is an act that develops feelings for God, not a feeling for God that is expressed in an act of worship. When we obey the command to praise God in worship, our deep, essential need to be in relationship with God is nurtured.” - Eugene Peterson, A Long Obedience in the Same Direction

REFLECTION
> How can obedience to God nurture a relationship with God?
> What area of your life is not yet reflective of obedience to God?
BIG IDEA
An apprentice of Jesus is learning to live like Jesus.

SCRIPTURE
“When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. ‘Do you understand what I have done for you?’ he asked them. ‘You call me “Teacher” and “Lord,” and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.’” - John 13:12-17

INSIGHT
“The point is that, for us as for Jesus, we should be looking away from ourselves, and at the world we are supposed to be serving. Where the world’s needs and our vocation meet is where we ought to be, ready to take on insignificant roles if that’s what God wants, or to be publicly visible if that is our calling. And, as with Jesus, the picture of footwashing is meant to serve not only as a picture of all sorts of menial tasks that we may be called to perform, without drawing attention to them. It also points towards the much larger challenge…the challenge to follow Jesus all the way to the cross, to lay down life itself in the service of God and the world he came to save.”
- N.T. Wright, John for Everyone Part 2

REFLECTION
> In a world that values being served, how hard is it for you to imitate Jesus’ example of servanthood?
> What opportunities do you have to serve others today?
An apprentice of Jesus is learning to live like Jesus.

“Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.” - John 14:11-14

“If you are an apprentice of Jesus, your end goal is to grow and mature – not overnight, but over time – into the kind of person who can carry on the work of Jesus. However, anytime we talk about Jesus as the example, people think, ‘Well, yeah, but Jesus was God. I’m not Jesus or God.” The problem with this way of thinking is the disciples did miracles too and they were not God. Everything Jesus did, he did as a real, true human being empowered by the Holy Spirit as the example for his apprentices to follow. When God became Jesus of Nazareth, he put aside the ‘God card.’ He became human. He did what he did by the Holy Spirit. His disciples did what they did by the Holy Spirit. The early church did what it did by the Holy Spirit. Now, we do what we do by the Holy Spirit.” - John Mark Comer, “Do What Jesus Did” (practicingtheway.org)

What is your response to Jesus’ words that “whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even great things than these”? What would it look like for you to be open to the Holy Spirit empowering you to do what Jesus did?
WEEK 5
DAY 5

BIG IDEA
An apprentice of Jesus is learning to live like Jesus.

SCRIPTURE
“Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’” - Matthew 28:16-20

INSIGHT
“There is a special evangelistic work to be done, of course, and there are special callings to it. But if those in the churches really are enjoying fullness of life, evangelism will be unstoppable and largely automatic. The local assembly, for its part, can then become an academy where people throng from the surrounding community to learn how to live. It will be a school of life (for a disciple is but a pupil, a student) where all aspects of that life seen in the New Testament records are practiced and mastered under those who have themselves mastered them through practice. Only by taking this as our immediate goal can we intend to carry out the Great Commission.” - Dallas Willard, The Spirit of the Disciplines

REFLECTION
> Would the way you live draw people in your neighborhood, workplace, school, etc. to want to know more about Jesus?
> Who is God calling you to invest your life in so that they, too, can become apprentices to Jesus?
Jesus came announcing that there was a way of living, a way of being in the world, that was available to us right now. The kingdom of God has come near! We don’t have to wait until after we die to experience eternal life, we can experience a life that is truly life today! How? By responding to Jesus’ invitation to “follow me.” Jesus invites us to be his apprentices in living. He wants to guide us in living a life that is truly life.

This five-week journaling experience will help you reflect on what it means to say “Yes!” to Jesus’ invitation.