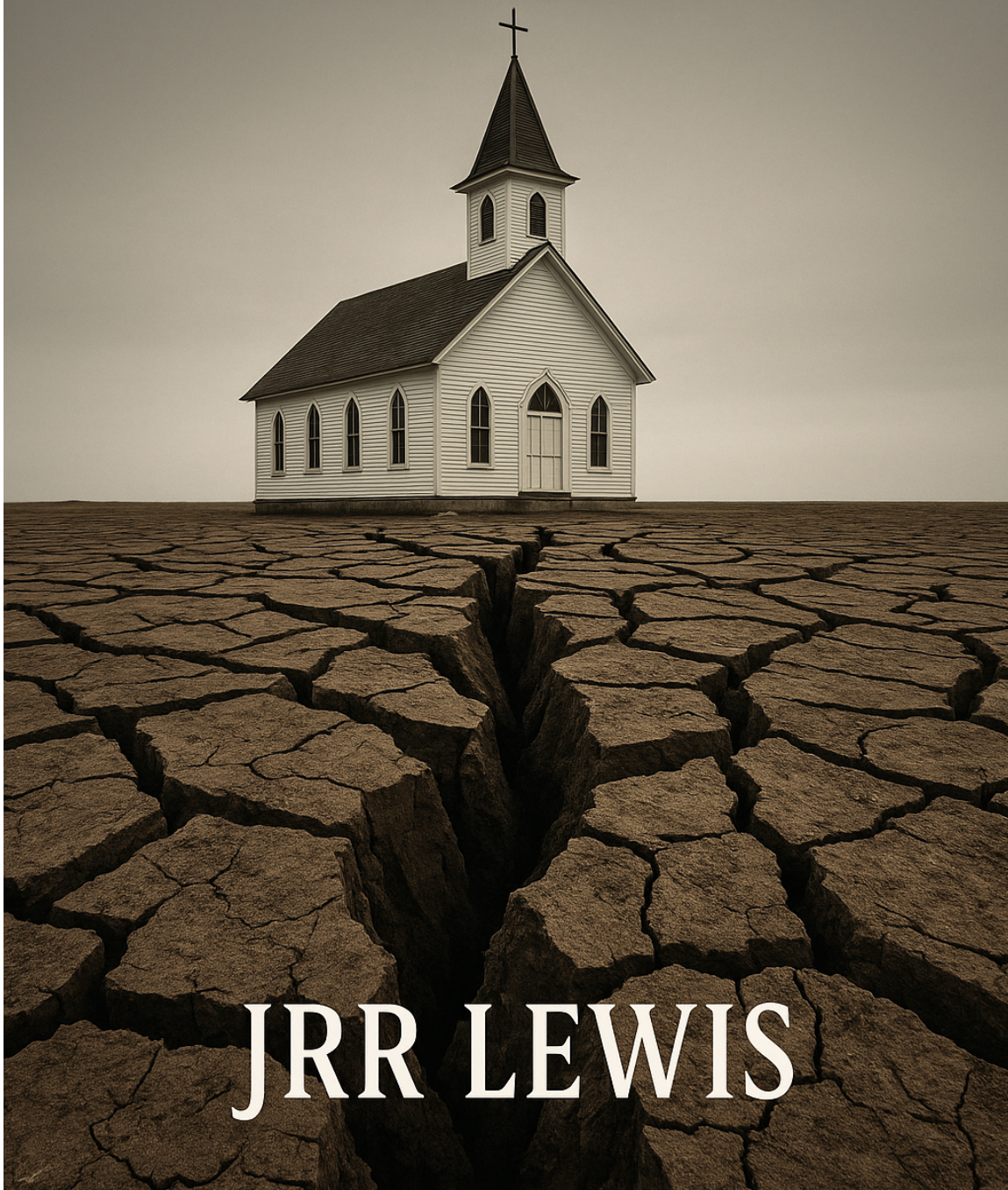


CHRISTIANITY

HOW DID I NOT KNOW THIS?



JRR LEWIS

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Introduction: A Mile Wide, An Inch Deep

I sat in church nearly all my life.

I sang hymns.

I heard sermons.

I joined programs.

And still, I missed it.

Not everything.

But the essentials.

The weighty truths.

The foundations that make Christianity real.

Somehow I lived in the house of faith,
but never noticed the foundation under my feet.

Why This Book

It is not just my story.

The numbers prove it.

Surveys show only 9% of professing Christians
believe the six most basic tenets of the faith:

- The Bible is God's Word.
- Jesus is the only way.
- Salvation is by grace.
- Jesus lived sinless.
- God is sovereign.
- Satan is real.

Nine out of ten churchgoers
deny one or more.

Nine out of ten.

We are a generation
a mile wide,
an inch deep.

What This Means

It means we are in danger.
Not from persecution.
Not from culture.
But from ignorance.

We have forgotten who we are.
We have lost what we believe.
We have silenced what God has spoken.

And the church is weak.
Shallow.
Hollow.

Not Just “Them”

This is not a book to point fingers.
It is a book to hold up a mirror.

Because the problem is not just “out there.”
It is in me.
It is in us.
It is in every pew.

I was blind to truths that should have been obvious.
And I suspect I am not the only one.

Why Self-Reflection Matters

The danger is not ignorance of trivia.

The danger is neglect of salvation.

If I miss who Jesus is,
if I miss what grace means,
if I miss the Spirit within,
if I miss the reality of eternity —

then I miss Christianity itself.

So this book is not about curiosity.

It is about eternity.

What Do We Do With the Truth?

We do not hide from it.

We do not excuse it.

We do not soften it.

We face it.

We receive it.

We act on it.

We let the Word pierce.

We let the Spirit convict.

We let the truth transform.

This is not for the lazy.

This is not for the proud.

This is not for those who want comfort without change.

This is for the hungry.

The humble.

The ones who know something is missing.

How to Read This Book

Read slowly.

Pause often.

Ask yourself:

“Did I miss this too?”

Every chapter will start with confession.

What I thought I knew.

Every chapter will show what Scripture really says.

And every chapter will end with reflection.

What this means for me.

It is not theory.

It is self-examination.

A Final Word Before We Begin

I am not writing as a scholar.

I am writing as one who missed it.

And finally woke up.

If you find yourself in these pages,
do not despair.

God gives grace.

He gives clarity.

He gives Himself.

The question is not:

“How could I have missed this?”

The question is:

“What will I do with the truth now?”

Chapter 1: Garden to Garden — The Story We Forgot

I thought the Garden of Eden was just a Sunday-school story.

Adam and Eve.

A serpent.

A piece of fruit.

A big mistake.

The lesson seemed simple: don't disobey God.

The result: sin, suffering, death.

The end.

But I missed the point.

I missed the presence.

I missed the story.

Confession — What I Thought I Knew

I thought salvation was just forgiveness.

A ticket out of hell.

A place in heaven after I die.

Life here?

Mostly waiting.

Trying not to sin too much.

Trying to be good enough.

I didn't see Eden as God's design.

I didn't see restoration as the goal.

I thought Christianity was escape.

But escape is not the story.

Restoration is.

What the Bible Actually Says — The Thread of Presence

The Garden of God's Presence — The Beginning

Genesis shows a garden, planted by God Himself.

“And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden... the tree of life was in the midst of the garden.” (Genesis 2:8-9)

God walked with Adam and Eve.

“They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.” (Genesis 3:8)

But sin fractured it all.

“The LORD God sent him out... He drove out the man... and placed the cherubim and a flaming sword to guard the way.” (Genesis 3:23-24)

The true loss was not paradise.

The true loss was presence.

Israel — God Dwelling Again

God tried to dwell again with His people.

“Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst.” (Exodus 25:8)

The tabernacle.

The temple.

The glory cloud.

But it was always limited.

Mediated.

Veiled.

A taste, not fullness.

Gethsemane — The Hinge of the Story

Another garden.

Another test.

Another tree.

Adam: “*Not Your will, but mine.*”

Jesus: “*Not My will, but Yours be done.*” (Luke 22:42)

Adam chose rebellion.

Jesus chose obedience.

Adam fell in a garden.

Jesus rose in a garden.

The curse pressed down.

The sweat fell like blood.

The way back began to open.

The Cross and Resurrection — Curse Carried, Way Opened

“*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.*”
(Galatians 3:13)

At the cross, He bore it.

At the resurrection, He broke it.

The temple veil tore.

The separation ended.

The presence returned.

New Jerusalem — The Restored Garden

John’s vision closes the loop.

“*Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them.*”
(Revelation 21:3)

A river flows.
The tree of life yields fruit.
The curse is no more. (Revelation 22:1-3)

What was lost in Eden is restored in eternity.
Not clouds.
Not harps.
But God Himself, with His people.

Summary Thread

The story of the Bible is one story.
The presence of God with His people.

Garden of God's presence lost.
Garden of obedience in Gethsemane.
Garden of restoration in Revelation.

Not escape.
Restoration.

Why I Missed It

I was lazy.
I never traced the dots.
I settled for fragments.

I assumed the point was sin → punishment → forgiveness.
But the point was presence lost → presence restored.

I imagined heaven as a cloudy waiting room.
Not a real creation, renewed.
Not God dwelling with man again.

Why the Church Muffled It

We skipped the Old Testament.
We preached the cross without the garden.
We reduced the gospel to decision cards.

We preached fragments, not the whole arc.
We dulled longing with comfort.
We offered escape, not restoration.

Life Between Gardens — How This Changes Us

Work

Work was not the curse.
“The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden... to work it and keep it.” (Genesis 2:15)
Work now is training for eternal stewardship.
“Well done... you shall have authority over ten cities.” (Luke 19:17)

Obedience

Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane is our pattern.
“He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death.”
(Philippians 2:8)
Obedience restores what rebellion ruined.

Hope

Abraham looked forward.
“The city with foundations, whose designer and builder is God.” (Hebrews 11:10)
Not clouds.
Not escape.
But permanence.

Discipleship

We live as exiles.
“Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles...” (1 Peter 2:11)
This world is not home.

It is the broken garden.
We prepare for the restored one.

Depth Drills & Mirror Checks

Depth Drill

Read Genesis 1-3, Luke 22, and Revelation 21-22 in one sitting.
Ask: What was lost? How did Jesus reopen it? What is still ahead?

Mirror Checks

1. Am I living like this broken world is permanent, or preparing for the restored garden?
2. Where do I echo Adam's "my will" instead of Christ's "Your will"?
3. Do I see my work as empty toil, or as practice for eternity?

Closing Reflection & Prayer

One garden was lost.
Another garden opened the way.
Another garden is coming.

Don't confuse the broken one with the restored one.
Don't cling to the wrong one.

Prayer

Lord, show me Your story.
Forgive me for clinging to thorns.
Teach me obedience like Jesus in Gethsemane.
Help me long for Your restored presence,
where You will dwell with us forever.

Amen.

Chapter 2: The Six Tenets — What We No Longer Believe

I used to think “Christian” was a wide word.
If someone went to church.
If they prayed before meals.
If they called themselves “believers.”
That was enough.

But what makes a Christian is not a label.
Not a habit.
Not even sincerity.

It is truth received.
It is allegiance to Christ.
It is faith in what God has revealed.

And here is the shock:
Surveys show only **9% of professing Christians in America** affirm six core truths.
Nine out of ten deny one or more.

If that is true, then most of what calls itself “Christianity” is not Christianity at all.

Confession — What I Thought I Knew

I assumed the faith was broad.
Flexible.
A big tent.

I thought disagreements over doctrine were minor.
Optional.
Safe.

But without a foundation, the house collapses.
And without the essentials, the faith dissolves.

What the Bible Actually Says — The Six Tenets

1. The Bible is God's inerrant Word

"All Scripture is breathed out by God." (2 Timothy 3:16)

Yet nearly **half of churchgoers** say the Bible has errors.
If it does, then man, not God, decides truth.
And the Word no longer rules us.

2. Jesus is the only way to God

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6)

Yet nearly **60% of Christians under 40** say all religions can lead to heaven.
If that is true, then the cross was unnecessary.
Christ died for nothing.

3. Salvation is by grace alone

"By grace you have been saved through faith. This is not your own doing... not a result of works." (Ephesians 2:8–9)

Yet surveys show **over half of professing Christians** believe "being good" is enough.
If works can save, then grace is not grace.
And Christ's glory is diminished.

4. Jesus lived a sinless life

"He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth." (1 Peter 2:22)

Yet nearly **half of believers** think Jesus may have sinned.
If He sinned, He could not be the spotless Lamb.
And we are still in our sins.

5. God is sovereign and active

“Our God is in the heavens; He does all that He pleases.” (Psalm 115:3)

Yet many picture Him as distant, hands-off, detached.

If God is not sovereign, then chaos rules.

And prayer is wasted breath.

6. Satan is real

“Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion.” (1 Peter 5:8)

Yet **six in ten Christians** say Satan is only a symbol.

But Jesus faced him.

Cast out demons.

Defeated him at the cross.

If Satan is only a metaphor, then Jesus fought shadows.

Why I Missed It

I thought these were advanced doctrines.

Theology for pastors.

Not basics for me.

I thought sincerity was enough.

If someone meant well, God would understand.

I confused tolerance with truth.

And I believed lies.

Why the Church Muffled It

We feared offense.

We wanted numbers.

We softened hard edges.

We preached stories but not substance.
We gave encouragement but not essentials.
We entertained, but we did not equip.

We silenced doctrine.
And in doing so, we silenced truth.

What This Means

If only **9% believe all six**, then **91% are deceived** in at least one essential.
That is not drift.
That is apostasy.

Strip away these truths, and what is left is not Christianity.
It is hollow.
It is powerless.
It is a shadow.

This explains the collapse of the church in the West.
This explains the weakness of cultural Christianity.
This explains why faith feels so thin.

Life With the Tenets — How This Changes Us

The Bible as inerrant → I submit, not edit.
Jesus as the only way → I proclaim, not apologize.
Grace alone → I live humbled, not proud.
A sinless Savior → I trust His sacrifice, not mine.
A sovereign God → I rest secure, not anxious.
A real Satan → I stay watchful, not naïve.

These six are not advanced theology.
They are the doorway.
They are the minimum.
Without them, there is no Christianity.

Depth Drills & Mirror Checks

Depth Drill

Write down the six tenets.

Pray through one each day for a week.

Ask God to anchor your faith in each truth.

Mirror Checks

1. Do I believe all six? Or do I secretly doubt one or more?
2. Do I live as if they are true?
3. Could someone watching my life tell that I believe them?

Closing Reflection & Prayer

We have lost the basics.

And without the basics, we lose the faith.

The six tenets are not optional.

They are the pillars of the house.

Remove one, and the structure totters.

Remove more, and the house falls.

Prayer

Lord, anchor me in these truths.

Guard me from deception.

Give me courage to believe what is costly.

Give me strength to hold what many reject.

Do not let me trade Your gospel for a hollow shadow.

Amen.

Chapter 3: The Bible We No Longer Trust — Inerrancy

I grew up around the Bible.
It sat on coffee tables.
It was read in church.
It was quoted in prayers.

But deep down, I wondered:
Is it really perfect?
Hasn't it been changed over time?
Aren't some parts outdated?

I treated it like advice.
Good in spots.
Irrelevant in others.
Helpful, but not final.

Confession — What I Thought I Knew

I thought the Bible was optional.
A guide, not a command.
A suggestion, not an authority.

I felt free to edit in my heart.
Skip the hard parts.
Soft-pedal the offensive parts.
Highlight the encouraging parts.

I acted like God's Word needed my approval.
Like I was the judge, not the judged.

But if the Bible is not true in all it says,
then how do we know anything at all?

What the Bible Actually Says

“All Scripture is breathed out by God.” (2 Timothy 3:16)

Not some. All.

“Men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:21)

Not man’s words about God.

God’s words through men.

“The sum of Your word is truth,
and every one of Your righteous rules endures forever.” (Psalm 119:160)

Jesus Himself said:

“It is written...” (Matthew 4:4,7,10)

Three times to silence the devil.

If Jesus treated Scripture as inerrant,
how dare I treat it as optional?

Why I Missed It

I was lazy.

I wanted the easy verses, not the costly ones.

I was proud.

I thought my opinion weighed more than God’s Word.

I was influenced.

Professors, media, even Christians told me the Bible was flawed.

I swallowed the lie:

that man is wiser than God.

Why the Church Muffled It

We feared offense.

We worried people wouldn't stay if we preached the hard texts.

We softened Scripture into slogans.

We preached stories, not substance.

We gave devotionals instead of doctrine.

We told people the Bible "contains truth" but stopped short of saying it *is truth*.

We silenced authority.

And with it, we silenced God's voice.

What This Means

If the Bible has errors, who decides what is true?

We do.

If parts are outdated, who decides what to keep?

We do.

Once we stand above the Word,

we can no longer stand under it.

A cracked foundation means a collapsing house.

No wonder so many churches are hollow.

Life With the Word — How This Changes Us

Submit to it — even when it offends.

Trust it — even when culture mocks it.

Obey it — even when it costs.

Cherish it — as God's living voice.

“The word of God is living and active,
sharper than any two-edged sword.” (Hebrews 4:12)

If I believe that,
I cannot edit it.
I can only bow to it.

Depth Drills & Mirror Checks

Depth Drill

Spend one week in Psalm 119.
Each day, circle every phrase about God’s Word.
Pray each one back to Him.

Mirror Checks

1. Do I secretly edit the Bible in my heart, ignoring what I dislike?
2. Do I let the Word shape me, or do I reshape it?
3. Do I treat it as God’s voice, or man’s advice?

Closing Reflection & Prayer

The Bible is not man’s commentary on God.
It is God’s voice to man.

It is not optional.
It is not outdated.
It is not broken.

If I deny its truth,
I deny its Author.

Prayer

Lord, forgive me for standing above Your Word.
Forgive me for treating it as advice instead of authority.
Teach me to tremble at it.
Teach me to obey it.
Anchor me to truth that endures forever.

Amen.

Chapter 4: Jesus Alone — No Other Way

I wanted to believe God was broad.
That He welcomed all sincere seekers.
That He honored every faith.

It felt kind.
It felt fair.
It felt safe.

But if all roads lead to God,
then the cross was a mistake.
And Jesus died for nothing.

Confession — What I Thought I Knew

I thought sincerity was enough.
That good people from every religion could find heaven.

I thought Jesus was the best way,
but not the only way.

I didn't want to face the pain
of loved ones who rejected Him.

So I softened His words.
I nodded politely at "many paths."
I hid my unease behind silence.

But the truth does not bend.
And Jesus does not share His throne.

What the Bible Actually Says

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life.
No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6)

“There is salvation in no one else,
for there is no other name under heaven
given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)

“There is one God,
and one mediator between God and men,
the man Christ Jesus.” (1 Timothy 2:5)

Exclusive.

Absolute.

Unmistakable.

Jesus did not say He was one of many ways.
He said He was the only way.

The apostles preached the same.
The early church died for this truth.
Scripture leaves no middle ground.

Why I Missed It

I wanted God to be fair by my standards.
I confused kindness with compromise.
I cared more about people’s approval than about their souls.

I shrank from the offense of exclusivity.
I softened Christ to make Him palatable.
And in doing so, I made Him powerless.

Why the Church Muffled It

We feared offense.
We wanted to be liked.
We longed for respectability.

We built interfaith partnerships.
We spoke of “shared values.”
We blurred lines to avoid conflict.

We preached encouragement but not exclusivity.
We offered comfort but not clarity.

And by avoiding offense,
we betrayed the gospel.

What This Means

If Jesus is one way among many,
then His death was unnecessary.

If people can be saved without Him,
then His blood was wasted.

The gospel is either exclusive or it is worthless.
You cannot call Him Savior
while denying His claim to be the only one.

Life With This Truth — How It Changes Us

Boldness

We proclaim Christ without apology.
Not ashamed.
Not embarrassed.

Humility

We are saved by grace,
not because we are better than anyone else.

Urgency

If He is the only way,
then silence is cruelty.

Clarity

The line is not blurred.

The line is Christ Himself.

Depth Drills & Mirror Checks

Depth Drill

Memorize John 14:6 and Acts 4:12.

Each day this week, pray for one person by name who needs Christ alone.

Mirror Checks

1. Do I secretly believe there are other ways to God?
2. Am I embarrassed by Jesus' exclusivity?
3. Does my life reflect urgency for those without Him?

Closing Reflection & Prayer

Jesus was not vague.

He was not polite about many paths.

He said:

“No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

That either makes Him the only Savior
or a liar.

There is no middle.

Prayer

Lord, forgive me for softening Your words.

Forgive me for trading truth for comfort.

Give me courage to proclaim Christ alone.
Give me compassion to weep for those without Him.

Let me cling to the one Name that saves.
Let me never apologize for the cross.

Amen.

Chapter 5: Grace That Saves — Not by Works

I grew up thinking I had to earn it.
Be good.
Try harder.
Do more.

I thought heaven was for the decent,
for the ones who tried their best.
God would grade on a curve.
Surely my good would outweigh my bad.

But that was a lie.
And it nearly kept me from Christ.

Confession — What I Thought I Knew

I thought salvation was about me.
My effort.
My record.
My performance.

I thought if I could just do enough,
God would be impressed.

I thought the cross helped,
but my works sealed the deal.

Hard truth:
if salvation depends on me,
then I am already lost.

What the Bible Actually Says

“For by grace you have been saved through faith.
And this is not your own doing;

it is the gift of God,
not a result of works,
so that no one may boast.” (Ephesians 2:8–9)

“But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared,
He saved us,
not because of works done by us in righteousness,
but according to His own mercy.” (Titus 3:4–5)

“To the one who does not work but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly,
his faith is counted as righteousness.” (Romans 4:5)

Grace alone.
Through faith alone.
In Christ alone.

Anything else is another gospel.

Why I Missed It

I was proud.
I wanted credit.
I wanted control.

I thought God owed me for my effort.
That He was impressed with my goodness.

I didn’t want to believe I was helpless.
That my righteousness was filthy rags. (Isaiah 64:6)

So I clung to works.
And nearly lost grace.

Why the Church Muffled It

We preached moralism:
“Be good. Try harder. Do better.”

We replaced gospel with self-help.
We turned sermons into life tips.

We focused on behavior,
not belief.

We wanted nice people,
not new creations.

And in doing so,
we raised generations who thought salvation was about effort,
not grace.

What This Means

If salvation is by works,
then no one is saved.

If salvation is by works,
then Christ died for nothing.

If salvation is by works,
then grace is a fraud.

But if salvation is by grace,
then the proud are humbled,
the weak are lifted,
and all glory belongs to God.

Life With This Truth — How It Changes Us

Humility

I cannot boast.

I did not earn this.

Security

If salvation depends on Christ,
then it does not collapse when I stumble.

Freedom

I no longer work to earn.
I work because I am already loved.

Joy

Grace cannot be repaid.
It can only be received with gratitude.

Depth Drills & Mirror Checks

Depth Drill

Read Romans 3–5 in one sitting.
Underline every time Paul contrasts works with grace.

Mirror Checks

1. Do I secretly believe my goodness makes me acceptable?
2. Do I live as if my failures put me outside God's love?
3. Do I serve from gratitude or from fear?

Closing Reflection & Prayer

Grace is scandalous.
It offends the proud.
It humbles the strong.
It saves the unworthy.

It glorifies Christ, not man.

No works can save me.
No effort can rescue me.
Only grace.

Prayer

Lord, thank You for saving me by grace.
Forgive me for trying to earn what You freely give.

Teach me to live humbly,
to work gratefully,
and to rest securely
in the gift of Christ.

Amen.

Chapter 6: The Sinless Savior — Why It Matters

I grew up hearing Jesus was human.

Like us.

Tempted like us.

Struggling like us.

Some even hinted He sinned.

Lost His temper.

Made mistakes.

Failed like the rest of us.

That sounded relatable.

But it was deadly wrong.

If Jesus sinned,

then Jesus could not save.

Confession — What I Thought I Knew

I thought Jesus' main role

was to show us how to live.

A moral example.

A model of kindness.

I thought His humanity meant imperfection.

That He stumbled like me,

just “better” at resisting.

I thought His cross was just solidarity,

not substitution.

But if He sinned,

He needed a Savior too.

And the cross was a waste.

What the Bible Actually Says

“He committed no sin,
neither was deceit found in His mouth.” (1 Peter 2:22)

“For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin,
so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Corinthians 5:21)

“We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our
weaknesses,
but One who in every respect has been tempted as we are,
yet without sin.” (Hebrews 4:15)

Jesus was human.
Fully human.
But perfect.
Spotless.
Blameless.

The Lamb of God.
Without blemish. (1 Peter 1:19)

Only a sinless substitute
could bear the sins of others.

Why I Missed It

I wanted Jesus to feel approachable.
Relatable.
Like one of us.

So I lowered Him.
I made Him common.
I made Him flawed.

I forgot His holiness.
I forgot His uniqueness.
I forgot His worthiness.

In making Him like me,
I lost sight of why He could save me.

Why the Church Muffled It

We focused on Jesus as example,
not as substitute.

We preached His compassion,
but not His perfection.

We told people He “understands your struggles,”
but we did not say
He conquered them without falling.

We made Him soft.
Approachable.
Relatable.
But powerless.

What This Means

If Jesus sinned,
He is not Savior.

If Jesus sinned,
the cross is empty.

If Jesus sinned,
death still reigns.

But because He was sinless,
death could not hold Him.

The grave could not keep Him.
Satan could not accuse Him.

He was holy.
Spotless.
Pure.

And His sacrifice counts forever.

Life With This Truth — How It Changes Us

Confidence

I trust His sacrifice fully.
Nothing more is needed.

Hope

Because He was sinless,
His resurrection guarantees mine.

Worship

I bow before Him,
not as a buddy,
but as the spotless Lamb of God.

Holiness

I pursue purity,
not to earn salvation,
but because my sinless Savior calls me higher.

Depth Drills & Mirror Checks

Depth Drill

Read Hebrews 4–10.

Note every time Christ's perfection is contrasted with human priests.

Mirror Checks

1. Do I secretly think Jesus failed like me?
2. Do I minimize His holiness to make Him “relatable”?
3. Do I rest in His finished work, or try to add to it?

Closing Reflection & Prayer

Jesus is not just my example.
He is my substitute.

Not just my companion.
But my sinless Savior.

Without His perfection,
I am still lost.

With His perfection,
I am forever secure.

Prayer

Lord, I confess that I have lowered You.
I have made You common in my mind.
Forgive me.

Thank You for being the spotless Lamb.
Thank You for being tempted, yet without sin.
Thank You for bearing my guilt on the cross.

Teach me to live in awe.
Teach me to pursue holiness.
Teach me to worship the sinless Savior.

Amen.

Chapter 7: The Holy Spirit — God Within Us

I grew up calling Him “it.”

Like a power.

Like a feeling.

Like electricity.

The Spirit was a mystery.

An afterthought.

The quiet member of the Trinity.

I did not know Him.

I did not trust Him.

I did not walk with Him.

And so, I lived powerless.

Confession — What I Thought I Knew

I thought the Spirit was a force.

Something God used.

Something I could summon.

I thought He was optional.

For the super-spiritual.

For the emotional.

I treated Him as background noise.

Invisible.

Irrelevant.

But without the Spirit,

I cannot even belong to Christ.

What the Bible Actually Says

“I will ask the Father,
and He will give you another Helper,
to be with you forever —
the Spirit of truth.” (John 14:16–17)

“You will receive power
when the Holy Spirit has come upon you,
and you will be My witnesses.” (Acts 1:8)

“Do you not know
that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you,
whom you have from God?” (1 Corinthians 6:19)

“If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ,
he does not belong to Him.” (Romans 8:9)

The Spirit is not an “it.”
He is God.
He dwells in believers.
He empowers.
He convicts.
He comforts.
He leads.

Without Him,
Christianity is empty ritual.

Why I Missed It

I feared what I did not understand.
I ignored what felt mysterious.
I wanted control,
not surrender.

I thought doctrine was safer than dependence.
So I silenced the Spirit.
And I starved my soul.

Why the Church Muffled It

We overreacted to abuse.
Some misused the Spirit for show.
So we downplayed Him.

We became cautious.
Respectable.
Safe.

We preferred programs to prayer.
Strategies to surrender.
Committees to conviction.

We mentioned Him in creeds,
but ignored Him in practice.

And the church became powerless.

What This Means

If the Spirit is ignored,
discipleship is impossible.

If the Spirit is absent,
the church is just a club.

If the Spirit does not dwell in me,
I am not in Christ.

Hard truth:
to treat the Spirit as optional
is to deny the gospel itself.

Life With This Truth — How It Changes Us

Assurance

The Spirit testifies that I am God's child. (Romans 8:16)

Holiness

The Spirit wars against my flesh. (Galatians 5:16–17)

Power

The Spirit equips me to witness boldly. (Acts 1:8)

Guidance

The Spirit leads me into truth. (John 16:13)

Hope

The Spirit is the down payment,
the guarantee of what is to come. (Ephesians 1:13–14)

Depth Drills & Mirror Checks**Depth Drill**

Read Romans 8 slowly.

Underline every mention of the Spirit.

Ask: what does He do in me?

Mirror Checks

1. Do I treat the Spirit as a person or as a force?
2. Am I depending on Him daily, or ignoring Him?
3. Would my life look any different if the Spirit were not in me?

Closing Reflection & Prayer

The Spirit is not optional.

He is not an accessory.

He is God Himself.

Living in me.

Without Him,
I cannot live the Christian life.

With Him,
I have power,
assurance,
guidance,
and hope.

Prayer

Holy Spirit, forgive me for ignoring You.
Forgive me for calling You “it.”
Forgive me for living as if I can do this on my own.

Fill me.
Guide me.
Convict me.
Comfort me.

Make me bold.
Make me holy.
Make me faithful.

God within me,
live through me.

Amen.

Chapter 8: Prayer — The Lifeline We Neglected

I cannot walk into the mayor's office.

I cannot call the governor.

I cannot speak to the president.

Barriers.

Guards.

Gates.

But the King of Kings says,

“Come.”

No appointment.

No security check.

No waiting list.

Direct access.

Any time.

Anywhere.

And yet,

I neglect it.

I take it for granted.

I treat it as small.

Confession — What I Thought I Knew

I thought prayer was ritual.

Before meals.

Before bed.

Before games.

I thought prayer was backup.

For emergencies only.

When nothing else worked.

I thought prayer was a performance.
String the words together.
Say the right phrases.
Sound holy.

I did not see prayer as lifeline.
I did not see it as constant communion.

And so I lived like a practical atheist.
Acknowledging God with my lips,
ignoring Him in practice.

What the Bible Actually Says

“They ought always to pray and not lose heart.” (Luke 18:1)

“Do not be anxious about anything,
but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving
let your requests be made known to God.” (Philippians 4:6)

“Pray without ceasing.” (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

“Let us then with confidence
draw near to the throne of grace,
that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:16)

Always.
Everything.
Without ceasing.
With confidence.

The door to heaven is open.
The line is never busy.
God hears.
God answers.

Why I Missed It

I was busy.
Too hurried to pray.

I was distracted.
Screens louder than silence.

I was proud.
I thought I could handle life without Him.

I was unbelieving.
I doubted prayer made a difference.

So I prayed little.
And lived weak.

Why the Church Muffled It

We replaced prayer with programs.
Committees.
Strategies.
Events.

We prayed at the start,
like an opening formality.
We prayed at the end,
like a benediction.

But we did not linger.
We did not wrestle.
We did not depend.

Prayer became filler.
Not fuel.

And the church lost its power.

What This Means

If we neglect prayer,
we deny our dependence on God.

If we neglect prayer,
we cut the cord to our lifeline.

If we neglect prayer,
we live like atheists,
even while confessing Christ.

Hard truth:
a prayerless Christian
is a powerless Christian.

A prayerless church
is a dead church.

Life With Prayer — How It Changes Us

Assurance

God hears me.
I am His child.

Peace

Prayer displaces anxiety.
“The peace of God... will guard your hearts.” (Philippians 4:7)

Power

Prayer brings heaven’s strength into earthly battles.

Intimacy

Prayer draws me into fellowship with the Father.

Dependence

Prayer humbles me daily:
without Him, I can do nothing.

Depth Drills & Mirror Checks

Depth Drill

Pray three times a day for one week.
Morning, noon, and night.
Not long, but real.
Notice how your awareness of God shifts.

Mirror Checks

1. Do I treat prayer as ritual, or relationship?
2. Do I pray only in crisis, or constantly?
3. Would my week look different if I truly believed prayer changes things?

Closing Reflection & Prayer

I cannot speak to my mayor.
I cannot approach my governor.
I cannot reach my president.

But I can speak to the Creator of the universe.
Anytime.
Anywhere.

The veil is torn.
The throne is open.
The King says, "Come."

Why would I neglect this lifeline?

Prayer

Lord, forgive me for treating prayer as small.
Forgive me for rushing past the open door.

Thank You for giving me access.
Thank You for hearing my voice.
Thank You for answering with mercy.

Teach me to pray without ceasing.
Teach me to depend on You.
Teach me to treasure this lifeline.

Amen.

Chapter 9: Love Is a Verb — Not a Feeling

I grew up thinking love was emotion.
Butterflies.
Warmth.
Romance.

I thought love came and went.
Here today,
gone tomorrow.

I thought love was something I fell into.
Or fell out of.

No wonder my love was weak.
No wonder my relationships were shallow.
No wonder my faith was hollow.

Because biblical love
is not a feeling.
It is an action.

Confession — What I Thought I Knew

I thought love meant liking people.
Being nice.
Keeping peace.

I thought love meant approving everything.
Never confronting.
Never offending.

I thought love was about me.
How I felt.
What I wanted.
Who made me happy.

But love is not about me.
Love is about sacrifice.

What the Bible Actually Says

“Little children, let us not love in word or talk
but in deed and in truth.” (1 John 3:18)

“Love is patient and kind;
love does not envy or boast;
it is not arrogant or rude.
It does not insist on its own way.” (1 Corinthians 13:4–5)

“Greater love has no one than this,
that someone lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13)

“This is love,
not that we have loved God,
but that He loved us
and sent His Son
to be the propitiation for our sins.” (1 John 4:10)

Love is not sentiment.
Love is sacrifice.
Love acts.
Love gives.

Why I Missed It

I was selfish.
I wanted love to be about how I felt.

I was shallow.
I thought emotions were enough.

I was afraid.
I didn’t want to love when it cost me.

So I reduced love to niceness.
To tolerance.
To convenience.

And I missed its weight.

Why the Church Muffled It

We made love sentimental.
Hearts.
Flowers.
Soft words.

We preached love as affirmation.
Never correction.
Never truth.

We confused love with approval.
We forgot that love speaks truth,
even when it stings.

We preached “God is love,”
but we forgot:
“God is holy.”

And in doing so,
we emptied love of power.

What This Means

If love is only a feeling,
it will fail when feelings fade.

If love is only approval,
it will collapse when truth offends.

If love is only romance,
it will die when sparks dim.

But if love is action,
then it endures.
Then it sacrifices.
Then it reflects Christ.

Life With This Truth — How It Changes Us

Marriage

Love is not falling in or out.
It is choosing, daily, to give.

Friendship

Love shows up.
Love listens.
Love sacrifices.

Church

Love speaks truth.
Love corrects.
Love bears burdens.

Enemies

Love prays for those who persecute. (Matthew 5:44)
Love forgives.
Love blesses.

Biblical love is not about comfort.
It is about the cross.

Love With Feet on the Ground

Love feeds the hungry. (James 2:15–16)
Love clothes the poor.

Love visits the prisoner. (Matthew 25:36)
Love binds up the brokenhearted.

Love sits with the grieving.
Love welcomes the stranger.
Love bears the burdens of the weak. (Galatians 6:2)

Love tells the lost about Jesus.
Not to win arguments.
Not to notch conversions.
But because eternity is real.

Love is not words on lips.
Love is hands extended.
Love is time given.
Love is wounds carried.

When love moves,
the world sees Christ.

Depth Drills & Mirror Checks

Depth Drill

Read 1 Corinthians 13.
Replace “love” with your name.
Ask honestly: does this describe me?

Mirror Checks

1. Do I reduce love to feelings?
2. Do I confuse love with approval?
3. Where is love costing me something right now?

Closing Reflection & Prayer

Love is not soft sentiment.
Love is not shallow tolerance.
Love is not selfish emotion.

Love is patient.
Love is kind.
Love lays down its life.

Love is a verb.
And the cross is its definition.

Prayer

Lord, forgive me for cheapening love.
Forgive me for making it about feelings.
Forgive me for withholding when it cost too much.

Teach me to love as You love.
In truth.
In sacrifice.
In action.

Make my life a verb of love.
A reflection of the cross.

Amen.

Chapter 10: Family & Marriage — God's Living Parables

I thought family was just natural.
Marriage just tradition.
Children just biology.

I thought home was private.
Personal.
Mine to shape however I wished.

But God says otherwise.
Family is His idea.
Marriage is His symbol.
Children are His heritage.

What happens in my house
is preaching a sermon to the world.

Confession — What I Thought I Knew

I thought marriage was about happiness.
As long as love lasted.
As long as it was easy.

I thought parenting was about success.
Grades.
Sports.
Careers.

I thought family was for me.
My comfort.
My pride.
My security.

But family is not my invention.
It is God's living parable.

What the Bible Actually Says

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother
and hold fast to his wife,
and they shall become one flesh.” (Genesis 2:24)

“This mystery is profound,
and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.” (Ephesians 5:32)

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger,
but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:4)

“Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD,
the fruit of the womb a reward.” (Psalm 127:3)

Marriage points beyond itself.

Parenting points beyond itself.

Family points beyond itself.

Each is a picture of God’s story.

Why I Missed It

I reduced marriage to romance.

Parenting to achievement.

Family to comfort.

I didn’t see the eternal dimension.

I didn’t see the parable God was telling.

I didn’t see the gospel etched in my home.

So I lived small.

And missed the big picture.

Why the Church Muffled It

We treated marriage like advice.
Tips and tricks.
Communication strategies.

We treated parenting like programs.
Behavior charts.
Church activities.

We failed to say:
This is holy ground.
This is eternal symbolism.
This is God preaching through your life.

We cheapened what God exalted.

What This Means

Marriage is not about me.
It is about Christ and His bride.

Parenting is not about me.
It is about raising disciples who belong to Him.

Family is not about me.
It is about showing the world the Father's love.

Hard truth:
When I distort family,
I distort the picture of God Himself.

Life With This Truth — How It Changes Us

Marriage

Husbands love wives
as Christ loved the church. (Ephesians 5:25)

Wives respect husbands
as the church follows Christ. (Ephesians 5:24)
Marriage becomes a living gospel.

Parenting

Fathers teach with patience.
Mothers nurture with faith.
Both point children to God,
not themselves.

Family

Homes become discipleship centers.
Table conversations become theology.
Bedtime prayers become worship.

Love With Feet on the Ground

Family love is not private.
It is witness.

A faithful marriage shines in a world of broken vows.
A godly home testifies in a culture of confusion.
Children raised in the Lord
become arrows shot into the future. (Psalm 127:4)

Family is not just survival.
It is mission.
It is discipleship.
It is eternal.

Depth Drills & Mirror Checks

Depth Drill

Read Ephesians 5–6 slowly.
Underline every command to husbands, wives, children, and fathers.
Ask: how is each tied to Christ?

Mirror Checks

1. Do I treat my marriage as a symbol of the gospel, or just a contract?
2. Do I see parenting as discipleship, or just achievement?
3. Does my home point beyond itself to God?

Closing Reflection & Prayer

Family is not an accident.
Marriage is not just romance.
Parenting is not just responsibility.

They are God's living parables.
Pictures of His love.
Pictures of His covenant.
Pictures of His kingdom.

When we live them rightly,
the world sees Him.

Prayer

Lord, forgive me for shrinking family to my comfort.
Forgive me for treating marriage lightly.
Forgive me for parenting for pride.

Teach me to live the parable well.
To love my spouse as Christ loves His church.
To raise children in Your instruction.
To make my home a witness to Your glory.

Amen.

Chapter 11: The Spiritual World — A Real Enemy, A Real War

I grew up thinking the real world
was what I could see.

Touch.

Measure.

Explain.

The unseen?

That was fantasy.

Superstition.

The stuff of movies.

But Scripture says otherwise.

The unseen is more real than the seen.

And whether I know it or not,

I am at war.

Confession — What I Thought I Knew

I thought evil was just human.

Bad people.

Bad choices.

Bad systems.

I thought Satan was a metaphor.

A symbol of darkness.

An idea, not a person.

I thought demons were ancient myths.

And angels just bedtime stories.

But if that is true,

then Jesus fought shadows.

And the cross makes no sense.

What the Bible Actually Says

“We do not wrestle against flesh and blood,
but against the rulers,
against the authorities,
against the cosmic powers over this present darkness,
against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” (Ephesians 6:12)

“Be sober-minded; be watchful.
Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion,
seeking someone to devour.” (1 Peter 5:8)

“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested,
that He might destroy the works of the devil.” (1 John 3:8)

Jesus cast out demons.
Jesus silenced Satan.
Jesus warned of hell.

The spiritual world is not a metaphor.
It is reality.

Why I Missed It

I was comfortable.
I didn't want to see life as a battlefield.

I was modern.
Science explained everything.
Or so I thought.

I was naïve.
I underestimated evil.
I overestimated myself.

So I lived unarmed.
Unaware.
Unprepared.

Why the Church Muffled It

We feared looking foolish.
So we avoided talk of demons, angels, or warfare.

We explained away the miraculous.
We ignored the warnings.
We reduced faith to psychology and sociology.

We taught coping, not combat.
We gave techniques, not armor.

And the enemy laughed.

What This Means

If I ignore the spiritual world,
I will fight the wrong battles.

I will blame people,
not powers.

I will waste my energy on flesh,
while unseen forces tear at my soul.

Hard truth:
the enemy is real.
The war is raging.
And neutrality is not an option.

Life With This Truth — How It Changes Us

Alertness

I live watchful,
aware that temptation has a source.

Armor

I put on the belt of truth,
the shield of faith,
the helmet of salvation,
the sword of the Spirit. (Ephesians 6:13–17)

Dependence

I pray constantly,
knowing victory is God's,
not mine.

Confidence

I fight not for victory,
but from victory.
Christ has already won.

Love With Feet on the Ground

Spiritual war is not just cosmic.
It is personal.

It is resisting temptation.
It is forgiving when hatred whispers.
It is praying when apathy presses.
It is loving when bitterness bites.

It is standing firm in Christ
when the enemy shouts:
“You are alone.
You are weak.
You are finished.”

The war is real.
But so is the victory.

Depth Drills & Mirror Checks

Depth Drill

Read Ephesians 6:10–20 aloud.
Each day, put on one piece of the armor in prayer.

Mirror Checks

1. Do I live as if the unseen world is real?
2. Do I fight people instead of the true enemy?
3. Am I armed daily, or unprepared?

Closing Reflection & Prayer

The spiritual world is not distant.
It is here.
Now.

The enemy is real.
The war is raging.
But so is the victory.

Christ has already triumphed.
And in Him,
I stand.

Prayer

Lord, open my eyes to the unseen.
Wake me from comfort and apathy.

Clothe me in Your armor.
Strengthen me in Your power.
Keep me watchful.
Keep me faithful.

Thank You that in Christ,
the war is already won.

Amen.

Chapter 12: The Temporary State of Man — Vapor and Eternity

I thought life was long.
Decades stretched before me.
Plenty of time.
No rush.

I thought death was distant.
For the old.
For the sick.
For someone else.

But Scripture says otherwise.
Life is a vapor.
Here for a moment,
gone in an instant.

Confession — What I Thought I Knew

I thought I was sturdy.
Healthy.
Strong.
Secure.

I thought tomorrow was guaranteed.
Next year was promised.
Old age was certain.

I thought eternity was far away.
Distant.
Future.

But eternity is always near.
Closer than I think.

What the Bible Actually Says

“You are a mist that appears for a little time
and then vanishes.” (James 4:14)

“All flesh is like grass
and all its glory like the flower of grass.
The grass withers,
and the flower falls,
but the word of the Lord remains forever.” (1 Peter 1:24–25)

“Teach us to number our days
that we may get a heart of wisdom.” (Psalm 90:12)

“It is appointed for man to die once,
and after that comes judgment.” (Hebrews 9:27)

Life is fragile.
Life is fleeting.
Life is temporary.

But eternity is forever.

Why I Missed It

I was distracted.
Chasing careers.
Chasing comfort.
Chasing tomorrow.

I was deceived.
The world told me:
“You have time.”
“You are in control.”

I was afraid.
I pushed death out of mind.
I ignored eternity.

And so I wasted days,
forgetting they were numbered.

Why the Church Muffled It

We stopped talking about death.
It felt too heavy.
Too grim.
Too negative.

We emphasized life now.
Your best life.
Your goals.
Your dreams.

We preached heaven,
but we rarely mentioned judgment.

We avoided urgency.
We softened eternity.
We distracted with now.

And our people drifted into apathy.

What This Means

If life is a vapor,
then wasting it is madness.

If death is certain,
then preparing for it is wisdom.

If eternity is real,
then today is training ground.

Hard truth:
every heartbeat echoes into forever.

Every breath is borrowed.
Every soul is eternal.

Life With This Truth — How It Changes Us

Urgency

I live ready.
Today could be the day.

Simplicity

I hold possessions lightly.
They cannot follow me into eternity.

Purpose

I measure decisions by forever,
not by decades.

Hope

I grieve,
but not as those without hope.
For in Christ,
death is defeated.

Stewards, Not Owners

“The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it.” (Psalm 24:1)

I own nothing.
Not my breath.
Not my time.
Not my possessions.
Not even my body.

All is gift.
All is loan.
All is temporary.

I am a sojourner.
A pilgrim.
A manager, not a master.

Jesus told parables of stewards.
Talents entrusted.
Servants called to account. (Matthew 25:14–30)

Life is short,
and every gift will be weighed.

To live as an owner is pride.
To live as a steward is wisdom.

Wisdom for the Journey

Teach us to number our days.
To measure them.
To value them.

A thousand years are as one day to the Lord.
Our longest life
is a breath to Him.

Wisdom is not avoiding death.
Wisdom is living ready for it.

Depth Drills & Mirror Checks

Depth Drill

Read Ecclesiastes slowly.
Circle every phrase about vanity, vapor, or futility.
Then read Revelation 21–22.
Notice how eternity swallows vanity in victory.

Mirror Checks

1. Do I live like my days are endless, or numbered?
2. Do I cling to possessions as if they last?
3. Do I live as an owner, or as a steward?

Closing Reflection & Prayer

Life is short.
Eternity is long.

We are grass.
We are mist.
We are dust.

But in Christ,
we are eternal sons and daughters.

Every breath matters.
Every day counts.
Every gift is on loan.

We own nothing.
We steward everything.
And we will give account.

Prayer

Lord, teach me to number my days.
Keep me from wasting what is short.
Anchor me in what is eternal.

Thank You for the gift of life.
Thank You for the hope of resurrection.

Thank You that in Christ,
death is not the end.

Make me wise.

Make me urgent.

Make me faithful with every gift.

Amen.

Chapter 13: God's Sovereignty — The Throne Above All

I grew up thinking God was distant.
Watching.
Waiting.
Hands-off.

I thought history just rolled forward.
Random.
Chaotic.
Out of control.

I thought prayer was wishful thinking.
I thought suffering was meaningless.
I thought evil had the last word.

But Scripture says otherwise.
God reigns.
God rules.
God sits enthroned above all.

Confession — What I Thought I Knew

I thought God reacted to the world.
Surprised.
Caught off guard.
Adjusting as He went.

I thought my choices were mine alone.
That nations rose and fell by accident.
That storms had no purpose.

I shrank God to human size.
And I lost peace.

Because if God is not sovereign,
then chaos rules.

What the Bible Actually Says

“Our God is in the heavens;
He does all that He pleases.” (Psalm 115:3)

“The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;
He frustrates the plans of the peoples.
The counsel of the LORD stands forever.” (Psalm 33:10–11)

“He changes times and seasons;
He removes kings and sets up kings.” (Daniel 2:21)

“Even the wind and the sea obey Him.” (Mark 4:41)

“All things work together for good
for those who love God,
who are called according to His purpose.” (Romans 8:28)

From galaxies to nations,
from storms to sparrows,
from rulers to my own heart —
God reigns.

Why I Missed It

I was proud.
I wanted control.

I was afraid.
I doubted God was strong enough.

I was deceived.
The world told me fate was blind.
That history was random.

So I lived anxious.
I lived restless.
I lived small.

Why the Church Muffled It

We wanted God to be palatable.
So we shrank His sovereignty.

We preached free will without balance.
We made God passive.
Hands tied.
Waiting on us.

We avoided the mystery.
We explained away the majesty.

And people lost confidence in God.

What This Means

If God is not sovereign,
evil wins.

If God is not sovereign,
suffering is meaningless.

If God is not sovereign,
the cross was an accident.

But because God is sovereign,
evil is restrained.
Suffering has purpose.
The cross was victory.

He rules.
Always.
Everywhere.

Life With This Truth — How It Changes Us

Peace

I rest in His plan.
Nothing surprises Him.

Prayer

I pray boldly,
knowing He has power to answer.

Humility

I stop boasting,
for even my breath is His gift.

Confidence

I live with courage,
knowing my God reigns.

Sovereignty in Suffering

Joseph's brothers sold him.
But Joseph said:
"You meant evil against me,
but God meant it for good." (Genesis 50:20)

The cross was injustice.
But Peter said:
"Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan of God,
you crucified and killed." (Acts 2:23)

Man plots.
Satan schemes.
But God rules.

Depth Drills & Mirror Checks

Depth Drill

Read Job 38–42.

Notice how God answers suffering with sovereignty,
not explanations.

Mirror Checks

1. Do I live anxious, as if the world spins without control?
2. Do I shrink God's reign to make room for my pride?
3. Do I rest in His plan, even when I cannot see it?

Closing Reflection & Prayer

God is not surprised.
God is not weak.
God is not waiting.

He reigns.
He rules.
He sits on the throne above all.

And because He reigns,
I can rest.

Prayer

Lord, forgive me for shrinking You.
Forgive me for doubting Your reign.

Lift my eyes to Your throne.
Teach me to trust Your plan.
Anchor me in Your sovereignty.

Thank You that You rule over nations,
over storms,
over history,
and over me.

Amen.

Chapter 14: End Times — Certainty Without Speculation

I grew up confused about the end.

Charts.

Timelines.

Debates.

Pre-trib.

Mid-trib.

Post-trib.

A thousand years literal.

A thousand years symbolic.

A thousand arguments.

I thought knowing the map
was the point.

But Scripture says otherwise.

The point is not speculation.

The point is certainty.

Christ will return.

Confession — What I Thought I Knew

I thought the end was puzzle-solving.

If I guessed right,

I was spiritual.

I thought the rapture was escape.

A “get out of hell free card.”

No cost.

No suffering.

I thought prophecy was for curiosity,
not holiness.

But end times are not about trivia.
They are about urgency.

What the Bible Actually Says

“Therefore you also must be ready,
for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.” (Matthew 24:44)

“Behold, He is coming with the clouds,
and every eye will see Him.” (Revelation 1:7)

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command,
with the voice of an archangel,
and with the sound of the trumpet of God.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16)

“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.” (2 Peter 3:10)

Scripture is clear on certainty:
Christ will return.
He will judge.
He will renew.

Scripture is restrained on details.
The timing is hidden.
The sequence is debated.

Why I Missed It

I loved speculation more than obedience.
I wanted dates, not devotion.
I wanted escape, not endurance.

I hoped the rapture would mean no suffering.
No cross.
Only crown.

I wanted a shortcut to glory.
And so I forgot the call to faithfulness.

Why the Church Muffled It

We divided over views.
We argued charts.
We split camps.

We sensationalized prophecy.
We wrote novels.
We sold fear.

Or we avoided it altogether.
Too confusing.
Too divisive.
Too controversial.

Either way,
we lost the focus.

What This Means

If Christ is returning,
then speculation is wasteful.

If Christ is returning,
then complacency is deadly.

The danger of a false view:
thinking a rapture means
I can live careless now.
As if holiness is optional.
As if endurance is irrelevant.

But Jesus said,
“Stay awake.” (Matthew 24:42)

“Be ready.” (Luke 12:40)

“Hold fast.” (Revelation 3:11)

The end is not escape.

It is accountability.

Life With This Truth — How It Changes Us

Watchfulness

I live alert.

Every day could be the day.

Holiness

I purify myself,

for I will see Him as He is. (1 John 3:3)

Endurance

I suffer with hope.

Knowing glory comes after the cross.

Mission

I live urgent.

The lost are not ready.

A Glimpse at the Views

Some believe in a rapture

before the tribulation.

Some during.

Some after.

Some believe in a literal thousand-year reign.

Some believe the millennium is now.

Some believe Christ’s return ushers in eternity at once.

Good Christians differ.
Faithful scholars disagree.
The details are debated.

But the essentials remain:
Christ is coming.
Judgment is real.
Eternity is forever.

Depth Drills & Mirror Checks

Depth Drill

Read Matthew 24 and 25 in one sitting.
Underline every time Jesus says “watch,” “ready,” or “faithful.”

Mirror Checks

1. Do I long for His coming, or ignore it?
2. Do I live holy, or hope for a shortcut?
3. Am I urgent for the lost, or complacent?

Closing Reflection & Prayer

The end is not a puzzle to solve.
It is a certainty to live for.

The question is not,
“When will He come?”
The question is,
“Will I be ready when He does?”

The rapture is not a free pass.
Judgment is not avoidable.
Holiness is not optional.

Christ is coming.
And every eye will see Him.

Prayer

Lord, forgive me for treating Your return as trivia.
Forgive me for longing for escape more than endurance.

Teach me to live ready.
Teach me to live holy.
Teach me to live urgent.

Come, Lord Jesus.
Come quickly.

Amen.

Chapter 15: Stewardship — Owning Nothing, Managing Everything

I grew up thinking what I had was mine.
My time.
My money.
My talents.
My life.

I thought I owned it.
I thought I earned it.
I thought I controlled it.

But Scripture says otherwise.
I own nothing.
I manage everything.

Confession — What I Thought I Knew

I thought God wanted 10%
and left the rest for me.

I thought serving was optional.
I thought giving was generosity,
not obedience.

I thought talents were mine to use,
for my goals,
my pride,
my comfort.

But the earth is the Lord's.
Every breath is borrowed.
Every gift is loaned.
Every life is entrusted.

What the Bible Actually Says

“The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof,
the world and those who dwell therein.” (Psalm 24:1)

“What do you have that you did not receive?
If then you received it,
why do you boast as if you did not receive it?” (1 Corinthians 4:7)

“Well done, good and faithful servant.
You have been faithful over a little;
I will set you over much.
Enter into the joy of your master.” (Matthew 25:23)

“Each of us will give an account of himself to God.” (Romans 14:12)

Not owners.
Stewards.
Managers of God’s resources.

Why I Missed It

I loved control.
I wanted to feel secure.
I clung to my stuff,
as if it could last.

I wanted applause for talent.
Credit for work.
Praise for effort.

I forgot that all is gift.
And every gift has purpose.

Why the Church Muffled It

We feared offending givers.
So we avoided talk of money.

We feared sounding demanding.
So we softened talk of service.

We taught God wanted a portion,
not the whole.

We preached blessing,
but not accountability.

And we raised consumers,
not stewards.

What This Means

If I own nothing,
then pride is foolish.

If I manage everything,
then accountability is certain.

If God is Master,
then I am servant.

Hard truth:
one day I will give account —
for my time,
my money,
my gifts,
my family,
my life.

Life With This Truth — How It Changes Us

Time

Every hour is God's.
I schedule with eternity in mind.

Money

Every dollar is God's.
I spend with mission in mind.

Talents

Every gift is God's.
I use them for His kingdom,
not my ego.

Family

Every child is God's.
I raise them for His glory,
not my pride.

Life

Every breath is God's.
I live ready to return it.

Stewardship With Feet on the Ground

Love gives food to the hungry. (Isaiah 58:7)
Stewardship means my pantry is not mine.

Love shelters the homeless.
Stewardship means my home is not mine.

Love supports the weak.
Stewardship means my strength is not mine.

Love preaches Christ.
Stewardship means the gospel in me is not mine to hoard.

Stewardship is daily.
It is budget choices.

It is time on calendars.
It is hands at work.

Not owners.
Never owners.
Only managers.

Depth Drills & Mirror Checks

Depth Drill

Read Matthew 25:14–30 (Parable of the Talents).

Ask: what has God entrusted to me?

What am I doing with it?

Mirror Checks

1. Do I live as if I own, or as if I manage?
2. Do I see my time and money as mine, or God's?
3. Am I ready to give account if He called me today?

Closing Reflection & Prayer

I am not owner.
I am steward.

Every gift is loaned.
Every breath is borrowed.
Every moment is entrusted.

And one day,
I will stand before the Master.
And He will ask:
“What did you do with what I gave?”

Prayer

Lord, forgive me for living like an owner.
Forgive me for clinging to what is Yours.

Teach me to be faithful.
Teach me to be generous.
Teach me to be wise.

Make me ready to give account.
Make me bold to invest well.
Make me eager to hear:
“Well done, good and faithful servant.”

Amen.

Conclusion: Knowing Him, Not Just Knowing About Him

I sat in church for decades.

I heard sermons.

I sang hymns.

I prayed prayers.

I thought I knew God.

But I only knew *about* Him.

Facts.

Stories.

Doctrines.

Head knowledge without heart knowledge.

Information without transformation.

And so my faith was shallow.

A mile wide.

An inch deep.

Confession — What I Thought I Knew

I thought Christianity was knowledge.

Get the answers right.

Pass the test.

I thought religion was ritual.

Show up Sunday.

Pray the prayer.

Keep the rules.

I thought God wanted behavior.

But He wanted relationship.

I thought knowing *about* Him was enough.
But He wanted me to know *Him*.

What the Bible Actually Says

“And this is eternal life,
that they know You, the only true God,
and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” (John 17:3)

“My sheep hear My voice,
and I know them,
and they follow Me.” (John 10:27)

“Indeed, I count everything as loss
because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.”
(Philippians 3:8)

Not knowledge about Him.
Knowledge of Him.
Personal.
Relational.
Transformational.

Why I Missed It

I liked information.
It was safe.
It was distant.

I liked ritual.
It was predictable.
It cost little.

I feared intimacy.
I feared surrender.

So I kept God at arm's length.
And wondered why faith felt empty.

Why the Church Muffled It

We replaced relationship with programs.
We measured knowledge,
but not intimacy.

We offered religion,
but not encounter.

We trained people to recite verses,
but not to walk with God.

We feared mystery.
We avoided presence.
We skipped communion.

And the people starved.

What This Means

If I only know *about* Him,
I am not saved.

If I only know facts,
I miss His face.

If I only know rules,
I miss His grace.

Christianity is not information.
It is relationship.

Hard truth:
Hell will be full of people

who knew about God,
but never knew Him.

Life With This Truth — How It Changes Us

Prayer

Not duty, but communion.

Scripture

Not trivia, but voice.

Obedience

Not checklist, but love.

Worship

Not performance, but presence.

Daily Life

Not routine, but walk.

Knowing Him in Practice

Knowing God is not invisible.

It leaves marks.

It bears fruit.

Grace is not just spoken.

It is shown.

In the home,

knowing Him means patience with children,

forgiveness in marriage,

prayer around the table.

In the workplace,

knowing Him means honesty when lying is easier,

integrity when compromise pays,
excellence as worship.

With the needy,
knowing Him means giving what I cannot spare,
visiting when it is inconvenient,
bearing burdens that are not mine.

With the lost,
knowing Him means courage to share Christ,
gentleness to listen,
faithfulness to love.

Faith without works is dead. (James 2:17)
Works do not earn grace.
But works prove grace is real.

If nothing changes,
if no fruit grows,
then I only knew *about* Him.
I never knew Him.

Depth Drills & Mirror Checks

Depth Drill

Read John 15 slowly.
Circle every phrase about “abiding.”
Ask: am I living in Him, or near Him?

Mirror Checks

1. Do I only know about God, or do I truly know Him?
2. Do I treat faith as facts, or as relationship?
3. Is there visible fruit that shows grace is real in me?

Closing Reflection & Prayer

The goal of this book
was never just knowledge.

Not to load your head with facts.
Not to sharpen arguments.
Not to win debates.

But to awaken relationship.
To remind us of forgotten truths.
To call us from shallow to deep.

Eternal life is this:
knowing Him.
Not just about Him.

And knowing Him will always show.
In love.
In works.
In fruit.

Prayer

Lord, forgive me for being content with knowledge.
Forgive me for mistaking religion for relationship.

Thank You for knowing me.
Thank You for calling me by name.
Thank You for drawing me near.

Teach me to walk with You daily.
To seek You above all.
To live fruitfully for Your glory.

Let my works show
that Your grace is real.

Not just to know about You,
but to know You.

Amen.

Addendum: Surveys confirm I'm not the only one.

Key Surveys & Findings

1. American Worldview Inventory / Barna Group (Cultural Research Center, 2021)

- Only **9% of self-identified Christians** in America hold a **biblical worldview**, meaning they affirm core biblical truths across belief and action. [Pew Research Center+9The Roys Report+9Arizona Christian University+9](#)
- Within that, only **6% qualify as “Integrated Disciples,”** demonstrating both beliefs and behaviors rooted in Scripture. [Arizona Christian University+2Juicy Ecumenism+2](#)

2. Pew Research Center (2008 & Earlier)

- A clear majority of American Christians—**around 52%**—believe at **least some non-Christian religions can lead to eternal life**. [Probe Ministries+8Pew Research Center+8Baptist News Global+8](#)
- These numbers have held across similar studies showing broad theological revisionism.

3. Follow-Up Evidence (Various Sources)

- The Barna data (2021) echoes earlier findings from around **2003**, which similarly showed only **4% of U.S. adults—and 9% of born-again Christians**—possessed a biblical worldview. [Pew Research Center+1The Roys Report+1](#)
- The **Probe 2020 survey** finds only **35% of adults** affirm that salvation comes solely **through Jesus Christ’s sacrifice**. [Pew Research Center+15Arizona Christian University+15Probe Ministries+15](#)

- A 2020 **Gospel Coalition**-referenced poll shows about **52% of Christian-identifying adults** include works or good behavior as a means to divine acceptance. Only **33%** affirm salvation solely by trusting Christ. [The Gospel Coalition](#)

Summary Table

Statistic / Belief	Source / Year	Finding
Attend three of the six core doctrines	Barna / CRC 2021	Only 9%
Full “Integrated Disciples” (believe & act)	Barna / CRC 2021	Only 6%
Non-Christian faith leads to eternal life	Pew 2008	52% of Christians say this
Biblical Worldview (born-again adults)	Barna / earlier study	Only 9%
Salvation through Christ only	Probe 2020	Only 35% affirm
Add works as component of salvation	GTC poll 2020	Only 33% choose faith only

What This Means

1. **These are real, replicated data points**, not isolated or anecdotal assertions.
2. **The trends are consistent** over time and across research organizations — Barna, Pew, Probe, Gospel Coalition — painting a consistent portrait of widespread diluted belief.
3. **The statistics are gelled around core truths** of the Christian faith: the Bible’s reliability, exclusivity of Christ, grace alone, works-only thinking, and biblical worldview adherence.
4. **This highlights the crisis the book addresses**: cultural Christianity often drifts, not from malice, but from ignorance and dilution of foundational truth.