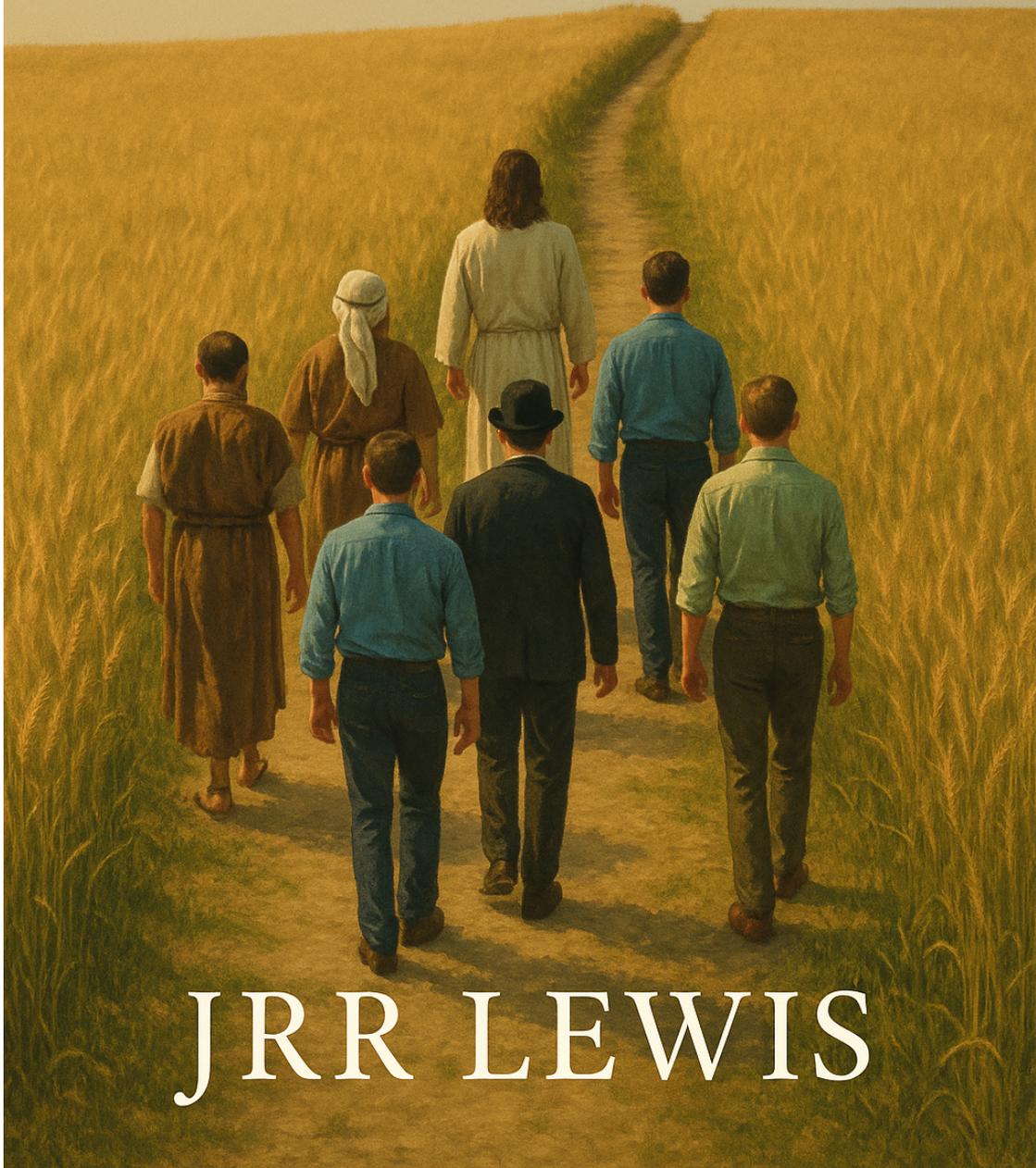


THE WAY

Christianity Unrefined



JRR LEWIS

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Introduction — Before It Was a Religion, It Was a Way

Before it was called Christianity...

Before there were church buildings and denominations...

Before the word “Christian” was used in Antioch...

It was simply known as **The Way**.

That’s what the early believers called it.

A way of life.

A way of worship.

A way of walking with God in the footsteps of Jesus.

It was gritty, bold, and deeply personal.

It wasn’t polished. It wasn’t safe.

It certainly wasn’t convenient.

It was **unrefined**.

And it was real.

What Happened?

Over time, the Way was institutionalized.

Then sanitized.

Then synchronized with the cultures around it.

We got systems instead of surrender.

Comfort instead of calling.

Checkboxes instead of cross-bearing.

Now many who claim the name of Jesus
don’t live the way of Jesus.

We eat like the world.

Spend like the world.

Hurry like the world.

Stress like the world.

And worship just enough to feel spiritual—without ever being transformed.

Why This Book?

This book isn't about going backward.

It's about **returning**.

Not to tradition, but to truth.

Not to man-made religion, but to the raw life Jesus modeled.

To the daily habits—of food, rest, work, parenting, worship, and simplicity—
that reflect *The Way* God actually gave us.

You were not made for artificial faith or processed living.

You were made to walk with God.

To trust Him for daily bread.

To rest in His rhythm.

To raise up the next generation in a world that is falling apart.

And to live—not as the world expects—but as **He intended**.

Who This Is For

This is for those who feel something's off.

For those who are tired of performing.

For those who believe in Jesus but want to *live like Him*.

For the overfed and spiritually starving.

For the hurried and the hungry.

For the parent, the pastor, the neighbor, the seeker.

This is a call to return.

To simplicity.

To truth.

To The Way.

Chapter 1: What Did God Mean?

“In the beginning, God created...”

Not chaos.

Not confusion.

Not compromise.

He created a world teeming with order, life, and sufficiency. A world with rhythms. A world that was **very good**.

“God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.” — Genesis 1:31

He gave man breath, beauty, and responsibility. He gave food that grew from the ground, animals that roamed free, and rest that came not from exhaustion —but from completion.

“The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.” — Genesis 2:15

He planted a garden and placed us in it.

Not a factory.

Not a courtroom.

Not a stadium.

A garden.

His Design Was Enough

God made water before thirst.

Fruit before hunger.

Purpose before boredom.

And communion before loneliness.

“Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.” — Isaiah 65:24

There was no need to invent additives, preservatives, or processed substitutes.
There was no junk food—because there was no junk.

We were not built to run on imitation.
And that applies to more than just food.

We weren't made for artificial relationships.
Artificial joy.
Artificial worship.
Artificial rules.

God meant for life to be lived in truth. With Him. In rhythm. In trust.

“The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul.” — Psalm 23:1–3

What We've Done Since

We've complicated what God made simple.
Refined what He called good.
We've marketed poison as preference, and indulgence as identity.

We've grown suspicious of God's way...
And addicted to our own.

We make food more “convenient”—and more toxic.
We work more hours for more things and get less rest.
We raise children on screens and slogans instead of Scripture and example.

We forget what God meant.

“My people have forgotten me days without number.” — Jeremiah 2:32

God Meant for Us to Be Whole

The world is filled with experts.
God gave us wisdom.

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” — Proverbs 9:10

The world is filled with movement.
God gave us rest.

“In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength.” — Isaiah 30:15

The world is filled with noise.
God gave us stillness.

“Be still, and know that I am God.” — Psalm 46:10

The world is filled with substitutes.
God gave us Himself.

“I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.” — John 6:35

He made man in His image.
He gave man work—but not to enslave him.
He gave man food—but not to glut him.
He gave man woman—not as property, but as a partner.

“Then God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness...’” — Genesis 1:26

“It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” — Genesis 2:18

Every gift had a purpose. Every boundary had a blessing.

So what happened?

We wanted more than God gave.
And we've been getting less ever since.

“Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images... Therefore God gave them over...” — Romans 1:22–24

Returning to the Design

This book is about what God *meant*.
And what we've done instead.

It's about eating, resting, living, and loving the way He created us to.
Not to earn salvation—but because it's the only way that *works*.
The only way that fills instead of empties.

“Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.” — Jeremiah 6:16

The answer is not a return to the law.
It's a return to the design.
To the garden.
To Jesus.

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest... For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” — Matthew 11:28–30

The world will offer you a thousand “improvements” to God's way.
But when you strip it all back, there's a simple truth waiting:

God's way still works.

Reflection:

God's original design was simple, sufficient, and sacred. What parts of your life have drifted far from that?

Questions:

- What does “God’s design” mean to you personally?
- Where have you added complexity that God never intended?
- What would it look like for you to return to God’s simplicity?

Chapter 2: The Earth Gives, We Take

“And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.” — Genesis 1:29

God gave.

We take.

He made a world that provides:
Fields that grow with seasons
Creatures that nourish with balance
Trees that bear fruit in time

All gifts.

No gimmicks.

But as time passed, the simplicity was lost.

The ground still gives—

But now we take too much.

“The heavens are the Lord’s heavens, but the earth he has given to the children of man.” — Psalm 115:16

God Designed

God’s menu was rich in color and texture—

Fruits, grains, leaves, and living water.

“He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the labor of man, so that he may bring forth food from the earth.” — Psalm 104:14

He gave animals as companions, laborers, and in some seasons, food.

He gave rest to the soil, rest to the body, rest to the soul.

He gave enough.

Always enough.

And **He called us to steward it.**

“The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.” — Genesis 2:15

But as demand outgrew discipline,
We replaced stewardship with strategy.
And eventually, systems replaced gardens.

What We Call Progress

Not all progress is evil.
But not all efficiency is good.

To feed growing populations, we learned to enhance harvests.
But enhancement became manipulation.
And soon...

- Seeds were altered for mass production
- Animals were raised in shadows, not pastures
- Soil was drained faster than it could rest

“Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness...” — Isaiah 5:20

Then came synthetic foods—designed not to nourish, but to sell.
And we were taught that speed and abundance equaled success.
But something inside us knew we were drifting.

The Quiet Ache

Most people don't choose to destroy the land.
Most don't want to eat chemicals or chase dopamine.
Most aren't seeking addiction—they're seeking relief.

So we don't scold.
We don't shame.
But we must ask:

Is there a better way?
Is there God's way?
And can we—where we are—begin to return to it?

*“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” —
Jeremiah 29:13*

A Gentle Return

You don't need a garden to honor God with your food.
But maybe you can...

- Eat what comes from the ground, not the lab
- Choose water over soda, and stillness over scrolling
- Learn what's in the food you're buying
- Bless what you eat, and thank the Giver
- Share a meal instead of eating in silence

This isn't legalism. It's an invitation.
Not to perfection—but to intention.

*“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of
God.” — 1 Corinthians 10:31*

From Egypt to Eden

In Scripture, Egypt often symbolized a system of control, excess, and slavery.
Eden, on the other hand, was a place of balance, beauty, and walking with
God.

“They refused to listen and failed to remember the miracles you performed among them. They became stiff-necked and in their rebellion appointed a leader in order to return to their slavery. But you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and you did not desert them.” — Nehemiah 9:17

Many of us live in a kind of Egypt now.
But our hearts still long for Eden.

God has not closed that door.
He still offers peace in the chaos.
Provision in the noise.
Clarity in the clutter.

He Still Feeds

Jesus didn't feed the 5,000 with junk.
He gave them fish and bread.
Real food.
Simple food.
Enough.

“They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.” — Matthew 14:20

And He still feeds today.
Not just your body—
But your craving for meaning.
Your need for rest.
Your ache for something real again.

So start where you are.
One choice. One meal. One step.

The earth gives.
God gives.
And you—you can begin to give thanks again.

“Give us today our daily bread.” — Matthew 6:11

“And be thankful.” — Colossians 3:15

Reflection:

Stewardship means honoring what God provides—not abusing it. What have you taken for granted?

Questions:

- In what ways do you consume more than you need?
- Do you thank God regularly for what the earth produces?
- How could you better honor His provision in your daily choices?

Chapter 3: Processed Faith, Processed Food

Not everything man touches improves.
Some things were better in their original form.
Like tomatoes.
Like wheat.
Like worship.
We've taken what God made simple...
And made it shelf-stable.

The Rise of Processed Food

Modern food is a marvel—
But also a mirror.
It reveals our obsession with speed, convenience, and control.
We've learned to extract.
To isolate.
To flavor without nutrition.
To make things last without living.

And somewhere in the process, we stopped asking:
Was this how God intended it?

“Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and delight yourself in abundance.” — Isaiah 55:2

The Rise of Processed Faith

And so it is with our worship.
We've learned to extract the parts we like:

- Music that stirs emotions
- Phrases that sound good on mugs

- Verses without context
- Morality without Messiah

We serve up a version of Christianity that's tidy and prepackaged—
Easy to consume, but lacking in substance.
It fills the schedule.
But it doesn't nourish the soul.

“They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.” — 2 Timothy 4:4

“These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.” — Matthew 15:8–9

Faith Without Presence

Processed food feeds without fellowship.
So does processed faith.
You can attend a service, repeat the lyrics, check the boxes—
And never once sit still before God.

You can “believe” without being changed.
You can quote Scripture without knowing the Shepherd.

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” — John 10:27

“Be still, and know that I am God.” — Psalm 46:10

God never asked for performance.
He asked for presence.

What We Lost in the Refining

Refined sugar tastes sweeter—but it rots the teeth.
Refined wheat bakes prettier—but it lacks the fiber.
Refined religion looks polished—but it can't sustain the heart.

The Pharisees had it down to a system.
So do we.

We've traded holiness for habit.
Surrender for slogans.
Truth for trend.

And we wonder why we're spiritually tired and emotionally starved.

"Having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people." — 2 Timothy 3:5

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence." — Matthew 23:25

Real Faith Is Messy

Jesus didn't hand out formulas.
He spat in mud.
He told cryptic stories.
He touched lepers.
He broke the Sabbath...
To restore what it was really for.

"Then he said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.'" — Mark 2:27

He broke bread, not rules.
He invited questions, not rituals.
He called us to die—not to decorate our routines.

"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me." — Luke 9:23

And He never once said,
"Just do enough to belong."

A Better Table

There's nothing wrong with church buildings, devotionals, or coffee-shop Christianity.

But if our faith has no grit, no cost, no transformation—
It's spiritual fast food.

It may feel good going down.
But it doesn't last.

God calls us to real meals.
Real worship.
Real engagement.

“Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.” — Psalm 34:8

He invites us to a table, not a drive-thru.
To break bread with Him, not just snack on ideas.

You Can Return

If you've felt distant—start with one thing.
Read a whole chapter instead of a single verse.
Pray in silence instead of formula.
Ask hard questions instead of memorizing safe answers.
Eat a real meal and talk about God around the table.

This isn't about guilt.
It's about returning to what fills.

The God who made the garden, the wheat, the vine, the fish—
He made you to live with Him, not just for Him.
Unprocessed.
Unpolished.
Real.

“Return to me, and I will return to you,” says the Lord Almighty. — Malachi 3:7

“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters... Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good.” — Isaiah 55:1–2

Reflection:

Both body and soul need nourishment—not just flavor. Is your faith feeding you or just entertaining you?

Questions:

- What spiritual habits in your life feel “processed”?
- How can you move toward a more authentic, personal relationship with God?
- What’s one “real food” and one “real faith” practice you could adopt this week?

Chapter 4: The Sabbath Is Still for Man — Moments of Rest, Not Just Days of Pause

God didn't need to rest.
He chose to.
Not because He was tired—
But because He was done.

“By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.”
— Genesis 2:2

Then He did something unexpected:
He **blessed** a day.
Not a mountain.
Not a monument.
A pause. A space in time.

“Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.”
— Genesis 2:3

He didn't bless the first skyscraper.
He blessed **stillness**.
Because Sabbath was never about productivity.
It was about **presence**.

The Purpose Was Always Relationship

When God said, *“Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy,”*
He wasn't issuing a restriction—
He was offering a gift.

“Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work...”
— Exodus 20:9–10

He knew we'd forget.
Forget who provides.
Forget who we are.
Forget to pause.

So He gave us a rhythm—
A weekly reorientation.
Not to **earn favor**,
But to **enjoy fellowship**.

But We Lost the Pattern

We work without stopping.
Scroll without thinking.
Worship with half a heart while multitasking.

We've filled every sacred gap with speed,
And wondered why our souls feel thin.

We don't rest to remember anymore.
We rest to **recover**—if we rest at all.

“In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it.”
— Isaiah 30:15

Then Came Jesus

Jesus didn't cancel the Sabbath.
He *clarified* it.
He didn't say it was obsolete.
He said it was **for us**.

“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”
— Mark 2:27–28

The Pharisees made the Sabbath a burden.
Jesus made it a bridge.

He **healed** on the Sabbath.
He **walked, taught, and loved** on the Sabbath.
He used it—not to stop *moving*—
But to stop *striving*.

The Sabbath wasn't created to restrict life.
It was made to restore it.

Not Just a Day—But a Devotion

After the cross, the early church wrestled with the old categories.
Was the Sabbath still binding?
Did Gentile believers need to keep it?

Paul answered with both freedom and wisdom:

“Do not let anyone judge you... with regard to a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.”

— Colossians 2:16–17

The shadow points to the real.
The **day** points to the **person**.

Sabbath was never the destination.
Jesus is.

So now—Sabbath is not just a *day* we set aside...
It's a rhythm we live inside.

The Sabbath Practice — Reimagined

You don't need to legalize it.
You need to **prioritize** it.

You can Sabbath in:

- One unrushed meal
- One silent walk
- One screenless evening
- One hour of slow Scripture and deep prayer
- One decision to rest instead of hustle

These are sacred too.

Not because they follow a rule.

But because they return your heart to **relationship**.

“Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him.”

— Psalm 37:7

Trust Wears a New Shape

The Sabbath is trust in disguise.

It says:

- “God is God—even if I stop working.”
- “I am not what I produce.”
- “He can hold my world while I pause.”

“In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat— for he grants sleep to those he loves.”

— Psalm 127:2

And when we practice it, even imperfectly,
we find the old truth still holds:

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”
— Matthew 11:28

A Return, Not a Requirement

You don't earn points by taking a Sabbath.
You don't lose grace by missing one.

But you **do miss something**
if you never stop.

You miss:

- The whisper in the silence
- The presence in the pause
- The realignment your soul longs for

God is still inviting.
Still calling.
Still walking in the cool of the day.
Will you stop long enough to walk with Him?

“Be still, and know that I am God.”
— Psalm 46:10

Reflection:

The Sabbath was made for man—not just as a law, but as a lifeline.
It isn't about which day, or how long.
It's about who you remember when you stop.

Questions:

- Do you feel guilty for resting—or guilty for never resting?

- When is the last time you stopped and truly remembered God?
- What's one part of your week you can set aside—not out of law, but out of love?

Chapter 5: Work, Then Rest — From Daily Bread to Digital Burnout

“Give us this day our daily bread...”

Not tomorrow’s.

Not next month’s.

Just today’s.

That was Jesus’ prayer for us.

“Give us today our daily bread.” — Matthew 6:11

It wasn’t because God is stingy—

It’s because He wants us close.

Daily.

Daily Bread, Not Storage Units

God didn’t tell Israel to hoard manna.

In fact, when they tried, it rotted.

“Each morning everyone gathered as much as they needed, and when the sun grew hot, it melted away... However, some of them paid no attention... they kept part of it until morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell.”

— Exodus 16:21, 20

Why?

Because He was teaching them to trust, not to strategize.

To receive, not to accumulate.

And yet—

We don’t just fill barns anymore.

We fill backup drives.

Retirement accounts.

Pantries and cloud subscriptions and worry upon worry.

We say we believe in daily bread.
But we live like it's all up to us.

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth... But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” — Matthew 6:19–21

We Own Nothing

You didn't make the wheat.
You didn't command the rain.
You didn't engineer your own lungs.

Everything you have is a gift.
Not a possession.
You are not an owner.
You are a caretaker.

“What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?” — 1 Corinthians 4:7

A steward of...

- Your energy
- Your talents
- Your time
- Your income
- Even your body

God gives.
We tend.
Then we return it to Him.

“The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.” — Psalm 24:1

Work Is Good — But It's Not God

God gave Adam work before the fall.
But it was joyful, fruitful, cooperative work.
Work in the cool of the day.
Work without shame, sweat, or striving.

“The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.” — Genesis 2:15

Today, we've reversed the order.
We work 24/7 and then try to squeeze in rest.
We check emails on Sunday.
We carry our calendars like crosses.
We glorify “the grind.”

“In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat— for he grants sleep to those he loves.” — Psalm 127:2

And when we finally collapse?
We call it burnout—
When often, it's disobedience.

Burned Out and Spiritually Starved

You weren't made to be always-on.
You weren't made for 60-hour weeks and 6-minute prayers.
You weren't made to run on caffeine, fear, and Wi-Fi.

We're not exhausted because God failed to provide.
We're exhausted because we forgot He already did.

“My God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.” — Philippians 4:19

Trust Is the Antidote

When you trust God for daily bread—
You stop chasing every opportunity.
You stop fearing the what-ifs.
You stop bowing to busyness.

You work with diligence—
But you rest with confidence.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding... and he will make your paths straight.” — Proverbs 3:5–6

Because you know the Provider.
And you know the bread is coming again tomorrow.

“Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” — Matthew 6:34

Rebuilding the Rhythm

Start simple:

- Set a stop time.
- Leave space between tasks.
- Take real breaks.
- Pray before meals.
- Thank Him for breath.

Not because these actions earn favor.
But because they remind your soul:
“I am cared for. I am not God.”

“He himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.” — Acts 17:25

Rest Is an Act of Worship

When you pause, you proclaim something powerful:

That the world can run without you.

That God is in control.

That your value is not in how much you produce.

That you already have what you need for today.

That He is still giving bread.

And He is still enough.

“Be still, and know that I am God.” — Psalm 46:10

“The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing... He makes me lie down in green pastures... He refreshes my soul.” — Psalm 23:1–3

Reflection:

We own nothing. God gives the bread—daily. Are you working like it all depends on you?

Questions:

- What does “daily bread” mean in your life right now?
- Where might you be overworking or under-trusting?
- How can you practice stewardship instead of ownership?

Chapter 6: The Pharisee in Us All — When Faith Becomes a Formula

The Pharisees didn't think they were lost.
They thought they were ahead of the class.

They tithed.
They fasted.
They prayed in public.
They kept the rules.

But when God Himself walked into the room,
they didn't recognize Him.
Worse—they hated Him.

*“He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him.” —
John 1:11*

Religion Refined

They had taken the law of Moses
and refined it
into something measurable.
Predictable.
Safe.

Faith had become a formula:

- Do these things
- Say these words
- Avoid those people
- Appear holy

And you're in.

No need for relationship.
Just performance.

*“These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.” —
Matthew 15:8*

Sound Familiar?

Today, we do the same.

We go to church for the habit.
Say grace before fast food.
Read a verse a day like a vitamin.
Say “God is good” while planning without Him.

We’ve kept just enough Jesus
to avoid the guilt.
But not enough to spark transformation.

We want a Savior—
Just not a Lord.

“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I say?” — Luke 6:46

The Checklist Gospel

We love checkboxes:

- Believe in God
- Go to church
- Be a good person
- Pray sometimes
- Don’t murder anyone

That should cover it, right?
Just enough to stay out of hell.
But not enough to be uncomfortable.

We don't want to carry a cross —
We want to carry a punch card.

“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.” — Luke 9:23

The Real Gospel Isn't Clean

Jesus was anything but sanitized.

He touched the unclean.
He healed on the wrong days.
He wept in public.
He called the “good people” snakes.
He forgave the wrong crowd.

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup... but inside... you are full of greed and self-indulgence.” — Matthew 23:25

And He made it clear:
The ones who thought they were saved...
were often the furthest from it.

Processed Faith Is Safe... and Dead

It keeps you busy.
It keeps you looking right.
But it keeps you far from God.

It avoids repentance.
It avoids surrender.
It avoids the uncomfortable conviction that says:
You are not okay.
Not without Him.

“You have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up!” — Revelation 3:1–2

But There’s Still Time

Jesus told a parable about two men praying.
One thanked God that he wasn’t like other sinners.
The other beat his chest and begged for mercy.

“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.” — Luke 18:14

Only one went home justified.
And it wasn’t the rule-keeper.

The Pharisee had the law in his mind—
but none of God in his heart.

We must ask:
Which one are we?

This Is the Wake-Up Call

If your faith feels hollow...
If you’re exhausted from trying to look the part...
If you’ve been “in church” your whole life but never really known God—

Then this is your moment.
Not to do more.
But to lay it all down.

To rip up the checklist.
To fall at the feet of Jesus.
To say, “I want You. Not the formula.”

Unprocessed faith is raw.
But it's real.
And it leads to life.

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”
— *Matthew 11:28*

Reflection:

God wants surrender, not performance. Have you settled for looking good over being transformed?

Questions:

- Where do you catch yourself performing instead of praying?
- How does your spiritual life look different from your actual relationship with Jesus?
- What would repentance look like—not for sin you've committed, but for the formula you've followed?

Chapter 7: Jesus Redefined Everything — Heart Over Law

“You have heard that it was said...
But I say to you...”

With those words, Jesus shattered the illusion
that good behavior was enough.
That outward obedience could substitute for a holy heart.

He didn't lower the bar.
He raised it—
And then offered Himself as the only One who could lift us over it.

*“Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees... you will
certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.” — Matthew 5:20*

Checkboxes Can't Save You

The law said: don't murder.
Jesus said: don't hate.
The law said: don't commit adultery.
Jesus said: don't lust.
The law said: love your neighbor.
Jesus said: love your enemy.

We like laws.
They're measurable.
Tidy.
External.

But Jesus didn't come to make you behave.
He came to make you new.

*“You have heard that it was said... But I tell you...” — Matthew 5:21–22,
27–28, 43–44*

Faith That Feels Safer Than Truth

A formula lets you feel spiritual... without being transformed.
You can sit in a pew, sing the songs, and still gossip.
You can wear the cross, and still hoard your wealth.
You can know all the verses, and still be addicted to comparison, judgment,
and sugar.

Jesus doesn't want your Sunday routine.
He wants your life.
And that costs more than comfort.

*"These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me." —
Matthew 15:8*

His Words Cut Deep

When Jesus spoke,
He bypassed the appearance and cut to the root:

What do you love?
What do you worship when no one is looking?
What are you hungry for?

He didn't say, "Stop overeating."
He said, "*Man shall not live on bread alone.*" — *Matthew 4:4*
He didn't say, "Avoid toxins."
He said, "*Beware the yeast of the Pharisees.*" — *Matthew 16:6*

His teaching always aimed beneath the surface.

The Mirror We Avoid

You can't follow Jesus without confronting yourself.
He holds up the mirror—

Not to shame you,
but to wake you.

He says:

You're overeating because you're anxious.

You're overstimulated because you're bored with holiness.

You're exhausted because you don't trust the Father.

You're addicted because you don't believe I'm enough.

These aren't lectures.

They're invitations.

To heal.

To surrender.

To actually be free.

"Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." — John 8:32

A Harder, Better Way

We don't need a new rulebook.

We need new hearts.

And those don't come through:

- Guilt-based diets
- Legalistic religion
- Or minimalist aesthetics that feel holy but lack surrender

They come through Jesus.

And Jesus never offered a cheap way out.

He offered a cross.

And a resurrection.

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you." — Ezekiel 36:26

What He Meant All Along

He wasn't replacing the law.
He was revealing its original intention:
To lead you to God, not to self-righteousness.

The law was a shadow.
He is the substance.

It's no longer about:

- What can I get away with?
- How much is enough?
- Where's the line?

It's about this:

Who do I want to become?

And the answer is clear.
We want to become like Him.

“For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” — John 1:17

Emulation, Not Just Belief

Jesus didn't say, “Admire Me.”
He said, “*Follow Me.*” — *Matthew 4:19*
He didn't say, “Agree with My theology.”
He said, “*Pick up your cross.*” — *Luke 14:27*
He didn't say, “Get it right.”
He said, “*Abide in Me.*” — *John 15:4*

This is not just faith.
It is unprocessed faith.

Raw. Relational.
Refined only by fire.
Alive.

Reflection:

Jesus didn't abolish the law—He exposed its purpose: a changed heart. Are you letting Him change yours?

Questions:

- Which of Jesus' teachings most challenges your comfort?
- Are you still trying to find the line rather than surrender to the Lord?
- What would heart-level obedience look like in your current struggle?

Chapter 8: Overfed and Undernourished — What We Hunger For

We have more food than any generation before us.

More supplements.

More diets.

More health trackers.

We also have more disease.

More addiction.

More exhaustion.

More despair.

We are, quite literally — full but empty.

And the problem is deeper than the pantry.

A Nation Stuffed and Starving

We eat fast because we're rushed.

We eat more because we're stressed.

We eat poorly because we're tired.

And we keep eating because we're still unsatisfied.

But it's not just calories we're missing.

We're missing contentment.

Peace.

Purpose.

God.

“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” — Matthew 4:4

The Hunger Beneath the Hunger

Jesus said,

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.” — Matthew 5:6

But we don't even know what we're hungry for anymore.

We eat when we're bored.

We scroll when we're lonely.

We buy things when we feel small.

We entertain ourselves when we feel lost.

We crave sensation—

Because we lack substance.

The Spiritual Parallel

It's not just the body.

We're spiritually overfed with:

- Motivational sermons
- Instagram verses
- Worship concerts
- Christian branding
- Spiritual “snacks” with little depth

But somehow, we're still anxious.

Still angry.

Still shallow.

Still hungry.

Processed religion gives you flavor—

But no **nourishment**.

“The time will come when people will not endure sound doctrine... they will accumulate teachers to suit their own desires.” — 2 Timothy 4:3

What Are You Really Hungry For?

If food is comfort,
you'll never stop needing more.
If religion is performance,
you'll never rest.
If success is your goal,
you'll never feel worthy.

But if Jesus is your portion,
you can go without the extras.

You'll find that simplicity satisfies—
Because it connects you again.
To the Giver.
To the purpose.
To the moment.

“My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.” — Psalm 73:26

Conviction, Not Condemnation

This chapter is not here to scold.
It's here to name what you already feel:

You're tired of faking fullness.
Tired of chasing dopamine hits that leave you emptier.
Tired of “more” that never satisfies.

And that's good news.
Because it means you're finally hungry for the right thing.

“Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen... and your soul will delight in the richest of fare.” — Isaiah 55:2

The Bread That Lasts

Jesus said,

“I am the Bread of Life. Whoever comes to Me shall not hunger.” — John 6:35

He wasn't talking about carb counts.

He was talking about wholeness.

About a satisfaction that doesn't depend on sugar or approval or achievement.

He meant you could eat a simple meal... and feel rich.

You could worship in silence... and feel full.

You could walk away from junk—physical or spiritual—
and find you didn't need it anymore.

Because you've tasted what is real.

Back to the Table

So what do we do?

- Eat slower.
- Eat thankfully.
- Eat closer to what God gave.
- Worship deeper.
- Learn longer.
- Rest without guilt.
- Repent without delay.

- And hunger—for the right things.

God is not shaming you for what you've consumed.

He's inviting you to His table.

And there's still room.

“Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in Him.” — Psalm 34:8

Reflection:

The body isn't the only thing that gets full and stays empty. What is your soul really hungry for?

Questions:

- What do you run to when you feel empty?
- How might food be acting as a stand-in for spiritual needs?
- What would spiritual nourishment look like for you this week?

Chapter 9: God's Provision Was Enough — Why He Didn't Give Us Red 40

God never added preservatives to His fruit.
He didn't dye the grapes brighter or inject the lamb with hormones.
He didn't lace wheat with stabilizers or flavor the honey with artificial sweetener.

He gave the earth what it needed.
And He gave us what we needed from the earth.

"Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good."
— *Genesis 1:31*

His provision was enough.

Then Came Our Improvements

We invented faster.
Longer shelf life.
Cheaper meat.
Flashier colors.

We made what God gave "better" —
But somehow... not healthier.
Not holier.
Not closer to Eden.

And we began to believe the lie:
God's way is outdated.
Man's way is more efficient.

"Professing to be wise, they became fools..." — *Romans 1:22*

But in every shortcut, something gets lost.

The Price of Progress

We now have:

- Strawberries that don't rot, but don't taste
- Bread that doesn't mold, but doesn't nourish
- Snacks that light up the tongue, but deaden the body

And in parallel:

- Sermons that excite, but don't convict
- Churches that grow, but don't disciple
- Lives that are full... but spiritually hollow

Red 40 doesn't just stain our food.

It stains our soul's expectations.

We think we need enhancement.

God says we need return.

Why Did He Give What He Gave?

Because He made your body.

He knows what it needs.

"For You formed my inward parts; You knitted me together in my mother's womb." — Psalm 139:13

Because He made your soul.

He knows how it grows.

He gave us real food to teach us real faith.

He gave us limits to teach us trust.

He gave us taste to teach us gratitude.

He gave us simple provision to teach us dependence.

We Don't Need More Options

We need more reverence for what we already have.

Water.

Grain.

Honey.

Sleep.

Stillness.

Truth.

Scripture.

Fellowship.

Jesus.

“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights...” — James 1:17

The essentials haven't changed.

We have.

And that's the problem.

You Can Return to Enough

You don't have to detox your whole life overnight.

But maybe you can...

- Eat the peach instead of the peach-flavored gummy
- Drink water instead of the energy drink
- Read the whole Gospel instead of a single inspirational quote
- Sit with God instead of scrolling past Him

You can choose enough again.

You can honor what God actually gave.

The Lies We've Swallowed

The world says:

- You need more.
- You deserve more.
- You'll fall behind if you don't upgrade.
- You'll miss out if you don't keep up.
- Natural is boring.
- Simplicity is weakness.
- Old ways are irrelevant.

But God says:

*“My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”
— 2 Corinthians 12:9*

*“Stand at the crossroads and look... ask for the ancient paths... and you will
find rest for your souls.” — Jeremiah 6:16*

My design is good.

You are dust and breath, not machine.

Return.

No One Needs Red 40

You don't need the spiritual version either.

You don't need flashy religion.

You don't need to add emotional flavor to make God palatable.

He is already good.

Already satisfying.

Already enough.

“O taste and see that the Lord is good...” — Psalm 34:8

And when you believe that—
You stop needing artificial everything.
You just want Jesus.
And He is better than bright.
He is true.

Reflection:

God gave good gifts. Are you still reaching for the artificial?

Questions:

- What processed habits—spiritual or physical—have you accepted as normal?
- Do you trust that what God gave is enough?
- How can you honor His provision with simplicity and gratitude?

Chapter 10: Love Your Neighbor, Not Your Convenience — Why Shortcuts Cost More Than Time

Convenience is the new god of the age.
Fast. Easy. On-demand. Automated. Disposable.
We've trained ourselves to expect life to be frictionless.
But real love is not convenient.
And neither is obedience.

“In the last days, people will be lovers of themselves... lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.” — 2 Timothy 3:1–4

Every Shortcut Has a Price

That perfectly packaged meal...
Someone likely labored under pressure to prepare it.
That overnight shipping...
Someone worked through the night.
That low-cost product...
Someone, somewhere, paid the true cost.

We don't see the factory.
We don't see the field.
We don't see the landfill.
We just see the “Buy Now” button.

But what we don't see is what's shaping our hearts.

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” — Matthew 6:21

When Consumption Trumps Compassion

You can't love your neighbor
and exploit them for speed.
You can't honor God's creation
and treat it as disposable.

We buy for the thrill.
We toss what's still good.
We gorge and waste and scroll and avoid.

Because convenience shields us
from what love would require.

The Gospel Is Inconvenient

Jesus walked everywhere.
He stopped when people touched His cloak.
He ate with the wrong people.
He healed on the wrong days.
He **washed feet**.

“The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life...” — Matthew 20:28

The cross was not convenient.
But love never is.

Slow Down to See

When you slow down, you start to notice:

- The person stocking the shelf
- The tired eyes behind the drive-thru window
- The single mom juggling two kids in line
- The friend who texts in broken grammar, but deep pain
- The elder who moves slowly, but carries wisdom

Love is not fast.
It takes time.
And time is the one thing our shortcuts keep stealing.

“Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.” — Philippians 2:4

What Convenience Is Really Costing

It's costing...

Depth

Gratitude

Relationship

Margin

Witness

Worship

And it's dulling our hunger for God.

Because if everything is easy—

Why would we need a Provider?

“They were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore they forgot Me.” — Hosea 13:6

Repentance Looks Practical

You don't need to move off-grid.

But you can ask:

- Who made this?
- Where did it come from?
- Do I need this now, or do I just want ease?
- How can I bless someone in this moment?

You can:

- Buy from people, not just platforms
- Cook a meal and share it

- Listen longer
- Tip generously
- Waste less
- Thank more

You can choose love over convenience—
And the world will notice.

“Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” — Matthew 5:16

A Kingdom of Slow, Steady Love

Jesus told stories about seeds and seasons, vineyards and long journeys.
Not microwaves and two-day shipping.

He’s building a Kingdom, not a brand.
He’s growing disciples, not consumers.

And He’s asking you to slow down and love well.
Even when it costs.
Especially when it costs.

Because real love never arrives in a box.
It shows up in person.

“Let us not grow weary of doing good...for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.” — Galatians 6:9

Reflection:

Convenience is often a form of self-love. What would it look like to choose love over ease?

Questions:

- When has your convenience come at someone else's expense?
- How can you slow down enough to see people this week?
- What choice of love might God be prompting you to make, even if it's inconvenient?

Chapter 11: Jesus' Lifestyle — Walk, Eat, Pray

Jesus didn't rush.

He walked.

He ate.

He prayed.

He didn't multitask miracles.

He didn't run to Galilee to boost His platform.

He didn't live in a state of "go go go."

And He didn't apologize for taking time to rest, to disappear, or to be alone with the Father.

"But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed." — Luke 5:16

The Pattern We Ignore

We say we follow Jesus—

But we don't live like He lived.

He walked dusty roads.

We sprint through digital mazes.

He lingered at tables.

We eat in our cars.

He spent the night in prayer.

We scroll until sleep.

He fasted for focus.

We snack for distraction.

Jesus lived with margin.

We live with anxiety.

"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me... and you will find rest for your souls." — Matthew 11:29

A Physical Faith

Jesus didn't just preach truth.

He embodied it.

He touched the sick

He carried the cross

He blessed the bread

He washed feet

He wept

He bled

Ours is not a disembodied faith.

It's incarnational.

And the way Jesus used His body speaks to how we should use ours.

“The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.” — John 1:14

Eating Was Ministry

Jesus didn't just eat to survive.

He used the table to reveal the Kingdom.

He broke bread with outcasts.

He reclined with sinners.

He fed thousands and made leftovers sacred.

Every meal was a moment of grace.

A chance to slow down.

To give thanks.

To see people.

And yet today, meals are rushed, silent, or skipped altogether.

We've turned food into fuel,

instead of fellowship.

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with Me.” — Revelation 3:20

Walking Was Discipleship

Jesus didn't say, "Come sit in a classroom."
He said, "Come follow Me."
And they did—step by step, mile by mile.
Learning not just from His words,
but from His presence.
You can't follow Jesus
if you're not willing to walk with Him.

"Whoever claims to live in Him must live as Jesus did." — 1 John 2:6

Prayer Was Connection

Jesus didn't pray out of obligation.
He prayed out of dependence.
He prayed alone.
He prayed in agony.
He prayed with thanksgiving.
He prayed before choosing, before healing, before enduring the cross.
If Jesus—the sinless Son of God—needed that much prayer,
how much more do we?

"He went out to the mountain to pray, and He continued all night in prayer to God." — Luke 6:12

Unprocessed Living Means Slowing Down

Following Jesus means we must slow the pace.
You can't microwave holiness.
You can't binge-watch sanctification.
You can't Amazon Prime your character.
Spiritual formation is slow.
And Jesus shows us how to **walk it out**.

“Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus...” — Hebrews 12:1–2

His Way Is Still Available

You don't need to become a monk.

But you can:

- Take a slow walk without your phone
- Eat without distraction
- Invite someone to your table
- Wake up 10 minutes earlier to pray
- Fast from noise
- Thank God with every bite, every breath, every step

Because Jesus didn't just come to die for you—

He came to show you how to live.

“I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.” — John 13:15

Reflection:

Jesus' life was not just holy—it was human. He walked, ate, and prayed in rhythm with the Father. Are you following His pattern or the world's?

Questions:

- Which part of Jesus' lifestyle do you most overlook—walking, eating, or praying?
- Where can you slow down this week to better follow His rhythm?

- What does your current pace of life say about your trust in God?

Chapter 12: The Amish Aren't Far Off — What Simpler Living Can Teach Us

They live without electricity.
They drive horse-drawn buggies.
They wear plain clothes, farm the land, and shun modern conveniences.
We call them outdated.
But maybe they're on to something.
Because while the world gets faster, louder, and more chaotic...
they remain rooted, disciplined, and oddly peaceful.
And some of us—if we're honest—are a little jealous.

A Quiet Rebuke

Their obesity rate is a fraction of ours.
Their food is grown, not manufactured.
Their families work together.
Their faith is central, not seasonal.
Their days are full, but not frantic.
They live slower.
Simpler.
And with far fewer options.
And yet... they seem to lack nothing essential.

*“Better a little with the fear of the Lord than great wealth with turmoil.” —
Proverbs 15:16*

We're Not Meant to Copy Them

We're not called to adopt their dress, dialect, or doctrine.
But we are called to pay attention.
Because their life exposes our addiction to convenience.
Our worship of options.
Our fear of being left behind.

We're not called to become Amish—
But we may be called to repent of our excess.

“Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.” — Luke 12:15

What Simplicity Teaches

Simplicity reveals what matters.
When you have fewer distractions,
you hear more clearly.
When you have fewer possessions,
you see what you truly value.
When you slow down,
you notice the person in front of you—
and the **Spirit within you**.

“In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength...” — Isaiah 30:15

They Don't Just Say “God Provides” — They Live It

The Amish pray for daily bread—
and then bake it.
They rely on the land—
and respect its limits.
They live in interdependent communities—
not isolated echo chambers.
And though they don't claim perfection,
they remind us:
You don't need to be plugged in
to be connected.

“Give us this day our daily bread.” — Matthew 6:11

“Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” — Galatians 6:2

A People Set Apart

God always called His people to be distinct.

Not better.

Not louder.

But noticeably different.

The Amish aren't the only ones who try.

But they are a living critique
of how far we've drifted from God's original rhythm.
And they're not far off from the Kingdom.

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” — Romans 12:2

“You are a chosen people... a holy nation, God's special possession...” — 1 Peter 2:9

Lessons Without Legalism

You don't need to churn your own butter
or throw away your phone.

But maybe you need to...

- Turn it off at meals
- Plant something in real soil
- Share tools with a neighbor
- Buy less
- Waste less
- Schedule solitude
- Let your faith be visible, not just personal

Not because it saves you—
But because it shapes you.

“Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” — Matthew 5:16

Living Light

Jesus said His yoke is easy and His burden is light.
But maybe we’ve packed too much for the journey.
We’ve added spiritual clutter.
Cultural baggage.
Emotional debt.
And all the while,
He’s still calling:
“Come, follow Me.” — Matthew 4:19

Reflection:

Simple living isn’t about looking religious—it’s about seeing God more clearly.
The quieter the life, the louder His voice becomes.

Questions:

- What habits or possessions complicate your walk with God?
- Where could your life reflect more contentment and less consumption?
- What is one “Amish-like” practice you could try this week to honor God?

Chapter 13: Man Shall Not Live by Bread Alone — Soul Nourishment and God-Dependence

“It is written: ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’” — Matthew 4:4

Jesus said this to Satan.
While hungry.
In the wilderness.
After forty days of fasting.

He was starving.
But He wasn't desperate.
Because He knew something we keep forgetting:

Bread keeps you alive.
But **God makes life worth living.**

Bread Alone Is Never Enough

Food can fill your stomach.
But not your soul.
Money can fill your account.
But not your heart.
Religion can fill your calendar.
But not your emptiness.

We live by what forms us, not just what fuels us.
And we are being shaped every day—
by what we seek,
by what we consume,
by what we trust.

“Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy?” — Isaiah 55:2

What Are You Really Living On?

You may think it's bread.
But for many of us, it's:

- Control
- Approval
- Distraction
- Productivity
- Emotional eating
- Spiritual performance

We "live" on these things.
Until they run out.
And they always do.

"Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things." — Philippians 3:19

Jesus Chose the Word

In the wilderness, Jesus didn't ask for relief.
He leaned on truth.

He quoted Scripture.
Not to win an argument,
but to declare His dependence.

He knew where real nourishment came from.
Not a loaf.
But a voice.

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” — Psalm 119:105

“The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.” — Isaiah 40:8

We Are Overfed and Underformed

We snack all day—physically and spiritually—
and still feel weak.

Why?

Because information isn't transformation.

And food isn't fulfillment.

Only the Word of God nourishes the soul.

Only the presence of God heals the heart.

“The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.” — Psalm 119:130

Dependency Is the Goal

Jesus didn't teach self-sufficiency.

He taught daily need.

“Give us this day our daily bread...” — Matthew 6:11

Not a lifetime supply.

Not a hoard for hard times.

Just enough to trust Him again tomorrow.

This is the rhythm of faith:

Receive. Trust. Repeat.

“Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself.” — Matthew 6:34

Nourishment, Not Just Fuel

God gave you hunger for a reason.
Not to frustrate you.
But to remind you.

Every craving is a clue—
that you are not whole without Him.
So eat well.
Rest well.
But above all—
Feed your soul.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.” — Matthew 5:6

A Better Bread

Jesus called Himself the Bread of Life.
Not the snack of comfort.
Not the dessert of the devout.

Bread—the daily, sustaining, core food of ancient life.
And He still is.
If you feast on Him,
you can go without everything else...
and still be full.

“I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.” — John 6:35

Reflection:

Bread sustains the body, but God sustains the soul.
Where you look for nourishment reveals who—or what—you trust.

Questions:

- What are you really “living on” day to day?
- How often do you feed your soul compared to your body?
- What would a diet of God’s Word look like in your daily rhythm?

Chapter 14: The Fruit of the Spirit, and the Spirit of Fruit — Peace, Gentleness, and Self-Control

Fruit is slow.

It doesn't shout.

It doesn't rush.

It grows, silently and steadily, under the watchful care of the gardener.

That's how the Spirit works too.

Not with noise.

Not with flash.

But with formation.

And one of the most powerful things He grows in you is something most diets and devotionals forget:

Self-control.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is... self-control.” — Galatians 5:22–23

The Fruits of the Flesh

Paul called them “acts of the flesh.”

We might call them normal.

- Impulsiveness
- Indulgence
- Anger
- Envy
- Addiction
- Escapism

- Apathy masked as busyness

These are not just bad habits.

They're fruit too—

But from a different root.

“The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery... hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage... and the like. I warn you... that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.” — Galatians 5:19–21

The Fruit of the Spirit

Paul lists them in Galatians 5:

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness
- Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- **Self-control**

The last one gets the least attention.

But it might be the one we most need.

Because without it—

**We keep choosing what feels good now
over what forms us forever.**

“Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control.” — Proverbs 25:28

Your Body Is Not the Enemy

God gave you an appetite.
But He didn't give you license.

Self-control isn't punishment.
It's protection.
It's not restriction—it's freedom.

Freedom to say:
“No” to what harms
“Not now” to what distracts
“Enough” when the world screams for more

“For the grace of God has appeared... teaching us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives.” — Titus 2:11–12

Fruit Requires a Root

You don't grow self-control through willpower.
You grow it through connection.
“*Abide in Me,*” Jesus said.
And you will bear fruit.

“Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself... apart from me you can do nothing.” — John 15:4–5

But apart from Him?
You can do nothing.
Not change.
Not grow.

Not resist the donut at midnight
or the bitterness after betrayal.

Gentleness Is Not Weakness

The world prizes assertiveness.
But God prizes gentleness.

Gentleness isn't being passive.
It's being strong... and choosing mercy.
Firm... but kind.
Unshaken... but humble.

It's what Jesus looked like when He bent to wash feet.
And what the Spirit looks like when He says, "Let's try again."

"Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near." — Philippians 4:5
"Take my yoke upon you...for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." — Matthew 11:29

A Quiet Strength

The Fruit of the Spirit is not glamorous.
It doesn't trend.
It doesn't perform.
But it lasts.
Because it grows from within.
Because it's proof that you're connected to something real.
And because it nourishes everyone who gets close to you.

"They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do." — Psalm 1:3

Reflection:

The world demands immediate results. But the Spirit grows lasting fruit. Which kind of harvest are you cultivating?

Questions:

- Which fruit of the Spirit feels most underdeveloped in your life right now?
- Are there areas where lack of self-control is affecting your faith, health, or relationships?
- How can you better abide in Christ this week, so the Spirit can grow in you?

Chapter 15: The Lie of More – Scarcity Mindset vs. Trust in God’s Provision

You probably don’t need more.

You just don’t trust that what you have is enough.

That’s the lie of scarcity:

“If I don’t grab it now, I’ll lose out.”

“If I don’t stockpile, I’ll suffer later.”

“If I don’t say yes to everything, I’ll miss my chance.”

But God never taught that.

Fear did.

The First Lie Ever Told

In Eden, the serpent didn’t tempt Eve with excess.

He tempted her with lack.

“You will not surely die...”

“You’re missing something...”

“God is holding out on you.”

“You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened...” — Genesis 3:4–5

And with one bite, abundance became anxiety.

Trust became grasping.

Sufficiency became suspicion.

And we’ve been chasing “more” ever since.

Scarcity in a World of Plenty

We live in the most materially rich culture in history—

And yet we still fear not having enough.

- We stock up
- We upgrade

- We hoard time, energy, and space
- We obsess over backups, warranties, insurances, and what-ifs

But what we call “planning”
is often just fear in disguise.

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth... But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” — Matthew 6:19–21

Scarcity and Food

This mindset affects how we eat too.

- We eat before we’re hungry
- We keep eating after we’re full
- We buy more than we need
- We throw away what we didn’t even want

Not because we’re hungry—
But because we’re afraid of hunger.
Afraid of being left out.
Afraid of emptiness.
Afraid of lack.

“Their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things.” — Philippians 3:19

Trust Looks Different

Jesus said:

“Your heavenly Father knows you need these things.”

He didn't say:

“You'll never feel tight.”

He said:

“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” — Matthew 6:33

That's not a promise of excess.

It's a promise of enough.

Manna Still Falls

God gave Israel manna—daily.

And told them not to store it up.

Those who tried?

It rotted.

*“Then Moses said to them, ‘No one is to keep any of it until morning.’
However... it was full of maggots and began to smell.” — Exodus 16:19–20*

He was teaching them something we still resist:

God gives what you need... when you need it.

Not to keep you insecure,

but to keep you close.

How We Fight the Lie

We don't fight scarcity by grabbing more.

We fight it by letting go.

You don't need a fifth option.

You don't need the next gadget.

You don't need more approval, more padding, or more plans.

You need more of God.

And less of what numbs you to Him.

“Better a little with the fear of the Lord than great wealth with turmoil.” — Proverbs 15:16

“The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.” — Psalm 23:1

Enough Is Worship

**To say, “This is enough”
is to say, “God, I trust You.”**

- Enough food
- Enough income
- Enough time
- Enough applause
- Enough “yes”
- Enough Jesus

“Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’” — Hebrews 13:5

Reflection:

The scarcity mindset says, “God might forget me.”

But trust says, “He never has.”

Where are you living like He won’t provide?

Questions:

- Where do you feel tempted to hoard, overconsume, or overcommit?
- What would it look like to live with “just enough” in one area of your life?

- How can you practice trust instead of control this week?

Chapter 16: From the Garden Forward — God’s Plan Hasn’t Changed

We act like the story has changed.
Like God had to adjust.
Like modern life rewrote His blueprint.
But the truth is—
God’s plan has never changed.
We’ve just stopped listening.

The Garden Was the Beginning

Before laws.
Before nations.
Before religion.
There was a garden.
A man.
A woman.
And God walking in the cool of the day.

“And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day...” — Genesis 3:8

No screens.
No schedules.
No shame.
Just purpose.
Presence.
Provision.
Peace.

The Fall Didn't Cancel the Plan

Sin broke the relationship.
But it didn't break the pattern.
God still calls us to:

- Steward the earth
- Rest weekly
- Live dependently
- Walk humbly
- Trust daily
- Eat thankfully
- Love deeply

“What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” — Micah 6:8

“The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.” — Genesis 2:15

His design didn't expire.
It just got harder to follow.

Every Generation Has Tried to Improve It

We built cities.
We built systems.
We built empires and industries and artificial lives.
We called it progress.
But often, it was distraction.

And every time we wandered, God called us back:
Through prophets

Through famine
Through silence
Through Jesus
And He still calls us now.

“The Lord warned Israel and Judah through all his prophets and seers: ‘Turn from your evil ways. Observe my commands and decrees...’” — 2 Kings 17:13

Jesus Came to Restore the Garden Life

He came to crush the serpent,
walk with us again,
and bring us back to the Father.

“The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.” — 1 John 3:8

“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” — John 14:6

But not by rewinding time.
By redeeming it.

He didn’t abolish our hunger—He fulfilled it.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.” — Matthew 5:6

He didn’t erase work—He made it worship.

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.” — Colossians 3:23

He didn’t deny suffering—He walked through it.

“He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.” — Isaiah 53:3

And He didn’t scrap the garden—
He started planting seeds of a new one.

The New Garden Is Growing

In Revelation, we see it:

A city with trees.

A river.

Healing leaves.

God dwelling with His people again.

“Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life... On each side of the river stood the tree of life... And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.” — Revelation 22:1–2

From Eden to Eden.

From garden to garden.

The plan has not changed.

God didn't pivot.

He's been restoring all along.

“He who was seated on the throne said, ‘I am making everything new!’” — Revelation 21:5

Your Life Is Meant to Reflect the Original

Not in style—

But in spirit.

- Simplicity
- Stewardship
- Sabbath
- Surrender
- Slow obedience
- Walking with God, not just working for Him

This isn't a return to the past.
It's a return to truth.

The Call Is Still the Same

Walk with Me.
Trust Me.
Tend what I've given you.
Don't take more than you need.
And remember—I am your portion.

*“The Lord is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in Him.” —
Lamentations 3:24*

It's not complicated.
We've just made it so.

Reflection:

The Garden was never abandoned—it was disrupted.
And God's entire story is about getting us back there.
Are you walking in step with that restoration?

Questions:

- Where in your life do you feel furthest from God's original intent?
- What modern “progress” might be drawing you away from peace and presence?
- How can you reorient one part of your life this week to reflect Eden's simplicity?

Chapter 17: Repentance, Realignment, and Return — How to Live as He Meant Again

You don't need a total reset.
You need a return.
Not to old habits,
not to shame,
not to rule-keeping.
But to God's way.
His rhythm.
His voice.
His plan.
The one that was good from the beginning.

*“Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.” —
Jeremiah 6:16*

The First Step Is Repentance

Not just regret.
Not just remorse.
Repentance means turning around.
Changing your mind—
and changing your direction.

“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.” — Acts 3:19

It's not about feeling bad for eating too much,
or skipping rest,
or performing fake religion.
It's about recognizing the pattern
and saying:
“This isn't working.
God, I'm ready to come back.”

Realignment Is a Process

You can't undo years of habits in a day.

But you can start today.

God's design isn't complicated—

it's just been buried under layers of noise and hurry and self.

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” — Romans 12:2

Peel it back, one layer at a time.

- Listen more
- Eat slower
- Live simpler
- Choose less
- Trust deeper

This is how we return.

It Starts Small

You don't have to:

Sell everything

Grow all your own food

Fast for 40 days

Read the Bible in a week

You just have to ask:

“What's one thing I can return today?”

One habit.

One meal.

One hour.

One honest prayer.

And then do it again tomorrow.

“Whoever is faithful in very little is also faithful in much...” — Luke 16:10

Returning Is Not Regression

You're not becoming irrelevant.
You're becoming real again.
The world tells you to upgrade everything—
God tells you to come back to enough.

*“Better a little with the fear of the Lord than great wealth with turmoil.” —
Proverbs 15:16*

The world demands you do more—
God invites you to abide.
The world wants faster—
God waits for fruit.

*“Remain in Me, as I also remain in you... 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*

You Were Always Meant to Walk With Him

Not to perform for Him.
Not to impress Him.
Not to just believe in Him.
But to **walk with Him**.
In the cool of the day.
With empty hands and open ears.

*“He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of
you? To act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.” —
Micah 6:8*

That's the life He made for you.
And it's still available.

“Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”
— *Matthew 11:28*

Reflection:

Repentance isn't about shame.

It's about freedom.

What needs to be turned around in your life so you can walk with God again?

Questions:

- What's one pattern you feel God calling you to turn from?
- Where in your life do you sense a need for realignment with His rhythm?
- What would “returning to God's way” look like practically in your next 24 hours?

Chapter 18: Living What You Were Given — A Life of Gratitude, Purpose, and Simplicity

You were never meant to live someone else's life.
You were never asked to keep up with the world's pace.
You were simply called to live what you were given.
To receive.
To steward.
To walk with God.
That's not passive.
That's worship.

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.” — Colossians 3:23

Start With Gratitude

Gratitude resets the heart.
It says,
“What I have is enough—because God gave it.”
“My body, though imperfect, is a gift.”
“My portion today is sufficient.”
“I didn't earn this—I received it.”
And from that posture, everything changes.

“Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.” — 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Reframe the Ordinary

The world says:
Cook to impress.
Work to achieve.
Rest to earn more energy for more doing.

But in God's economy:
Cooking is a form of care.
Work is a form of worship.
Rest is a form of trust.

“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” — 1 Corinthians 10:31

You don't need to escape ordinary life.
You need to **see God in it.**

Purpose Isn't Productivity

Your purpose is not defined by your output.
Not by how much you check off.
Not by how much you accumulate.
Not by how much you impress.

Your purpose is to:

- Know God
- Love others
- Care for what He's placed in your hands
- Reflect His nature
- Build His Kingdom, not your platform

And you can do that—today—
even in small, quiet ways.

“He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.” — Micah 6:8

The Beauty of a Simple Life

A simple life is not a smaller life.

It's a clearer one.

Less noise.

Less clutter.

Less grasping.

So there's more room for:

- Peace
- People
- Prayer
- Presence

You weren't made for chaos.

You were made for communion.

"Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you." — 1 Thessalonians 4:11

You Are Not Behind

If you've wasted years...

If you've lived processed, distracted, anxious...

It's not too late.

The God who formed you
can still reform you.

"I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten." — Joel 2:25

Jesus told a parable about a landowner who hired workers all throughout the day.

Some started at sunrise.

Some didn't begin until the final hour.
But when the day ended, they were all paid the same.

“But he answered one of them, ‘I am not being unfair to you, friend... Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’”

— **Matthew 20:13,15**

The point?
It's not about how long you've served.
It's about responding when you're called.

God's reward isn't based on *when* you return—
It's based on **His grace**.
If you come back to Him today,
You are not late.
You are loved.

Don't Just Believe—Live It

Don't just believe in God's way.
Live it.
Eat thankfully.
Pray deeply.
Work purposefully.
Rest fully.
Love sacrificially.
Give freely.
Trust daily.

Not because it saves you.
But because it transforms you.
Because this is what He meant.
And this is what He's still offering.

“Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.” — James 1:22

Reflection:

You've already been given enough.
Not just in food or faith—but in purpose.
The question now is: Will you live it?

Questions:

- Where have you overcomplicated life?
- What would it look like to live simply and purposefully, right where you are?
- What is one small change you'll make today to live what God has already planted in you?

Chapter 19: Raise Them in the Way They Should Go — Leaving a Legacy of Wholeness

They are watching.
Even when we think they aren't.
How we eat.
How we rest.
How we speak of God.
How we live when no one's clapping.
Children don't just hear what we say—
They inherit what we tolerate.

This Is Bigger Than You

Maybe you're changing your habits.
Maybe you're relearning what faith really is.
Maybe you're repenting of how far you've drifted.

That's good.
But it's not just about your life.
It's about what you pass on.

Because the world isn't just raising your children.
It's disciplining them.
One screen.
One snack.
One subtle message at a time.

If you're not intentional—
processed faith and processed food will disciple them for you.

*“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the
renewing of your mind.” — Romans 12:2*

How We've Failed Them

We've handed them:

- Convenience instead of character
- Performance instead of presence
- Entertainment instead of attention
- Fast food and fast faith
- Devices to pacify
- Distraction to numb
- Shallow teaching to keep the peace

We meant well.

But good intentions don't form godly hearts.

"These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." — Deuteronomy 6:6–7

The Way They Should Go

"Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it." — Proverbs 22:6

It doesn't say force.

It says *train*.

Day by day.

Example by example.

We teach them to:

- Bless food, not just grab it

- Rest without guilt
- Pray without formulas
- Read Scripture as oxygen, not obligation
- Trust God when life feels thin
- Love God for who He is, not what He gives

This isn't just parenting.
This is discipleship.

For Grandparents and Spiritual Parents Too

Maybe your kids are grown.
Maybe you didn't raise them this way.
But don't believe the lie that it's too late.

You can be a voice of grace.
You can model humility.
You can walk in obedience now
and show what real return looks like.

They need to see someone live it.
Let it be you.

"The righteous man walks in his integrity; his children are blessed after him." — Proverbs 20:7

Give Them Something to Imitate

Children don't need perfect parents.
They need real ones.

They need to see you say:
"I was wrong."
"Let's pray together."

“Let’s go outside and be quiet with God.”

“Let’s eat what God made and talk about who He is.”

They need someone who isn’t owned by screens, sugar, or hurry.

They need someone who walks with God in the open.

“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.” — 1 Corinthians 11:1

A Generation Is At Stake

We are not just shaping their behavior.

We are shaping their expectations of life.

If we don’t return to God’s way,
they may never know it was an option.

But if we do—

we give them a gift more valuable than success, security, or survival.

We give them the Kingdom.

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” — Matthew 6:33

Reflection:

Children inherit our habits, not just our beliefs.

What legacy are you building—and what needs to be rebuilt?

Questions:

- What have the next generation learned about God from the way you live?
- Where have you modeled processed faith or convenience-based living?

- What's one habit or truth you can begin demonstrating consistently this week?

Closing Prayer: Back to the Garden

Father,

From the beginning, You walked with us.
You gave us rhythm.
You gave us rest.
You gave us enough.

But we've wandered.
We've chosen speed over presence.
Convenience over conviction.
Processed food, processed faith—
And now our souls are thin.

Yet still, You call.
You remind us of the Garden.
You sent Jesus not only to redeem our souls—
but to restore our steps.
To show us how to live.

Slowly.
Gratefully.
Together.
Dependent.
Holy.

Forgive us for measuring worth by output.
Forgive us for feeding on what doesn't last.
Forgive us for raising children to chase what never satisfies.

And return us, Lord.

Return us to:
Daily bread
Lingering tables
Unhurried prayers

Work that blesses, not breaks
Faith that flows into every bite, breath, and burden

Plant new seeds in us—seeds of self-control, joy, and trust.
Pull up every root of fear and excess.
And grow in us the fruit of Your Spirit.

Make our lives a quiet resistance
to the chaos of this world.

Let our children see something different in us.
Let our homes be filled with laughter, not just lights.
Let our meals be sacred.
Let our work be worship.
Let our pace reflect our faith.

And when we grow tired of slow change—
Remind us:
You are the Gardener.
You are patient.
And You finish what You start.

We don't want a trend.
We want transformation.

So lead us—back to Eden, forward to glory—
Step by step
Day by day
With You.

In the name of Jesus,
Who walked slowly,
Who ate thankfully,
Who prayed deeply,
Who lived the life we forgot,
And offers it to us again—

Amen.