

I BELIEVE IN GOD, THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.
I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST, HIS ONLY SON, OUR LORD, WHO WAS CONCEIVED
BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY, SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS
PILATE, WAS CRUCIFIED, DIED, AND WAS BURIED; HE DESCENDED TO THE
DEAD. ON THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN, ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN, HE
IS SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER, AND HE WILL COME TO
JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD. I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE HOLY
CATHOLIC CHURCH, THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS, THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS,
THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY, AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING. AMEN.

the apostles' creed

This Reading Guide has been designed for use during Part II of the "Apostles' Creed" message series at South Ridge Church: February - March 2020

A Note from Pastor Justin:

Throughout this message series, we've taken the opportunity to emphasize that our beliefs lead to our values and ultimately to our behaviors. As we continue this series, I'd like to encourage you to continue to self-examine your beliefs, taking time to reflect on what you *actually* believe, and the impact those beliefs have on how you live.

Example:

Belief - What do I *actually* believe?

Value - How does this belief impact my values?

Behaviors - How does this belief impact my behaviors?

As we begin this series, let me encourage you to take a few important steps:

- (1) Write out the Apostles' Creed on your own (this exercise is part of Day 1 of this Reading Guide). As you write it out, ask yourself, *Is this really what I believe?* Also take the opportunity to write down any questions you may have about the Apostles' Creed or the Christian faith.
- (2) Commit to joining us every week of this series.
- (3) Commit to reading through this Reading Guide, reflecting and journaling through the questions provided within each daily reading.
- (4) Use a good Study Bible and/or other resources as you read through this Reading Guide. Refer to <https://southridgeblog.com/study-bible-info> for more information on many excellent Study Bibles available today. Some suggestions include:
 - NLT (or NIV) Life Application Study Bible, Third Edition
 - NIV Zondervan Study Bible
 - ESV Study Bible
- (5) Write down questions you have about what you're reading, and take opportunities to seek out answers to those questions.

DAILY READING EXAMPLE:

DAY 1: LOOKING FORWARD

The left side of each daily reading will contain a brief devotional.

READING & JOURNALING:

The right side of each daily reading will contain a few Scripture verses to read, and additional questions for reflection. You will most benefit from this study by writing out answers to all of the questions in a notebook. This will help you to pause and reflect on the Scriptures and topics for each reading.

PRAYER:

The right side of each daily reading will also contain a brief prayer to read and reflect on.

F260 READING:

This is an additional Scripture Reading for those who want to read through the foundational passages of Scripture throughout the year (Sept. 2019 - August 2020). This F260 Reading Plan paired with the "7 Arrows" method for reflection is an excellent way to *Read, Reflect, and Respond* to God's Word.

12 Articles of the Apostles' Creed:

- (1) I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.
- (2) I believe in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord;
- (3) who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary;
- (4) suffered under Pontius Pilate; [He] was crucified, dead, and buried;
- (5) He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead;
- (6) He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
- (7) From there He shall come to judge the living and the dead.
- (8) I believe in the Holy Spirit;
- (9) the holy catholic church*; the communion of saints;
- (10) the forgiveness of sins;
- (11) the resurrection of the body;
- (12) and the life everlasting. Amen.

*"Catholic" means universal; that is, there is one church across all times, places, and peoples



I BELIEVE...

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Week 6:

I believe in the Holy Spirit;

DAY 1: Are You Listening?

I (Pastor Justin) am regularly encouraging people to journal. If you're not somebody who regularly journals, let's take just a couple of minutes to journal together. Are you with me?

Grab a piece of paper or notebook, and go ahead and write today's date at the top of the page. Are you still with me? (If you don't have a piece of paper handy, you can use the back of this Reading Guide if you'd like.)

OK, let's keep going. For this particular journal entry, all you need to do is answer one question. Just one. That doesn't seem too challenging, does it? Of course not. OK, here's the question:

Question: Over the past 48 hours, what are a few things God has been speaking to you?

My guess is that you'll respond to this question in one of three ways: (1) You can quickly write down some things God has been speaking to you. (2) You'll need to pause and consider, but will eventually be able to write something down. Or, (3) You have no idea what to write down.

Which of these three ways best describes your response?

READING & JOURNALING:

JOHN 10:27-28

Over the past 48 hours, what are a few things God has been speaking to you?

If option #3 from today's reading is your go-to response, then ask yourself: Is God *not* speaking to you? Or have you not been listening?

What is one way you will be intentional in listening to God today?

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, today I am reminded that You are regularly speaking to me, but I'm not always listening. Help me today to quiet the distractions in my life and to listen carefully to all You're teaching me. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

F260 READING: (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

Read: Jonah 1 & 2

Journal: Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

DAY 2: I Believe in the Holy Spirit

Take a few moments to reflect on any questions you may have about the Holy Spirit. If you were to write them all down, there probably wouldn't be a shortage of questions. To believe in Jesus, His life, His death, and His resurrection is one thing, as there were hundreds of eye-witnesses. But there's some mystery behind the Holy Spirit.

Despite this mystery, belief in the Holy Spirit is another foundational believe in Christianity. All throughout the Scriptures we are reminded that there is one God, and *only* one. For example, Deuteronomy 6:4 reads, "...The Lord our God, the Lord is one." However, as Albert Mohler writes in *The Apostles' Creed*, "...the Bible reveals and affirms the following propositions: (1) The Father is God. (2) The Son is God. (3) The Holy Spirit is God."

This, of course, doesn't mean Christianity has three Gods. Instead, the Trinity shows that God has revealed Himself in these three persons. While there may be some mystery here, to deny the existence of the Holy Spirit would be to deny everything the Scriptures teaches about the Spirit. Without the Spirit, one can only believe in a god of their own making.

READING & JOURNALING:

MATTHEW 3:13-17, MARK 1:9-11

What thoughts came to mind as you read the end of today's devotional, "Without believing in the Holy Spirit, one can only believe in a god of their own making?"

What do you think is the significance behind God the Father, Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit all being present at Jesus' baptism?

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, while I know there is some mystery behind the Holy Spirit, I do trust that Your Spirit is real, and is living within me. Continue to help me hear Your voice so that I can live wisely. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

F260 READING: (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

Read: Jonah 3 & 4

Journal: Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

DAY 3: The Holy Spirit will Guide You in Truth

In our culture today, depression, anxiety, debt, and addiction are at an all time high. While the reasons for our overall lack of peace and contentment are many, researchers are discovering that one of the reasons for this trend is that we believe a lot of things that simply aren't true. For example:

- A young couple believes they can, and *should*, own a home with the same size and furnishings as their parents, though their parents took 30 years to build their home.
- Throughout High School, a student regularly tells herself, "I'll never have real friends." By age 30, she's addicted to heroine because she would do whatever she could to fit in.
- A 60 year old successful sales rep refuses to consider retirement, believing that his business will crumble if he chooses to do so.

Whether it's believing lies about our physical appearance, our relationships, our work, or the simple lie of, "I'll be content (or happy) when _____." Even the simplest of lies can have a detrimental impact.

Fortunately, we have the Holy Spirit to guide us in truth.

DAY 4: Walk with the Spirit

Take a moment to pause and consider the words you use when you pray. Are you more likely to pray for *your will* to be done, or are you more likely to pray for *God's will* to be done? Are you more likely to pray that God will bless and serve you and your needs, or are you more likely to pray for wisdom in how you may be a blessing for others? Do you pray as if God is your personal assistant, or as a personal friend?

Perhaps one reason for a lack of peace and contentment in our culture, even among Christians, is that we live our lives in highly self-centered ways. We believe that God exists to serve us, and not the other way around. We want God to walk in step with our lives, instead of changing how we live to walk in step with Him.

But the Christian life is not about getting God to walk in step with our lives, it's about us walking in step with Him. And while it may not always be *easy* to walk in step with the Spirit, life is harder when we choose not to do so.

I say then, walk by the Spirit and you will certainly not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is against the Spirit, and the Spirit desires what is against the flesh...

DAY 5: REVIEW

What was your biggest takeaway from this week's teaching — "I believe in the Holy Spirit?"

F260 READING: (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

Read: Joel 1, 2, & 3

Journal: Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

READING & JOURNALING:

JOHN 14:26, JOHN 16:12-15, 1 JOHN 2:20-21

We all tell ourselves things throughout the day which may be lies. Lies about God, about ourselves, or about others. What is the danger of telling yourself lies? Be specific.

Have you taken time to consider whether any of your hurts, habits, or hangups are the result of you believing a lie?

How does the Holy Spirit help us to combat these lies?

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I'm pretty confident that if I were to write out all of my thoughts throughout the day, I would discover that I'm telling myself, and perhaps *believing*, more lies than I realize. Help me to see the danger in these lies, and to stay focused on Your truth. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

F260 READING: (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

Read: Hosea 1, 2, & 3

Journal: Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

READING & JOURNALING:

GALATIANS 5:16-26

Re-read the opening questions in today's devotional. Be honest, which of these most aligns with your prayers?

What thoughts come to mind when you read, "And while it may not always be easy to walk in step with the Spirit, life is harder when we choose not to do so?"

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, forgive me for the many times my desires are for You to do my will and not the other way around. Moving forward, I want to lay aside my desires and simply focus on walking in step with You. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

F260 READING: (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

Read: Amos 1:1, 9:1-15

Journal: Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

I BELIEVE...

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Week 7:

...the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints;

DAY 1: [I Believe in] the Holy Catholic Church

The Apostles' Creed was written a long time. A really, really long time ago. At the time, there weren't a bunch of different denominations like there are today. People didn't walk around saying, "I'm a Methodist," or "I'm a Baptist," or "I'm Catholic." Instead, they simply identified themselves saying, "I'm a Christian," or "I follow Christ."

As such, the next line in the Apostles' Creed needs to be understood in its proper context. The phrase, "I Believe in the Holy Catholic Church," is nothing at all like somebody today saying, "I'm Catholic." Instead, the term *Catholic* here means, "Universal," or "Christian." In other words, it means that *all* people who have professed faith in Christ - regardless of what church they attend - are part of *The Church*.

To say you believe in the Holy Catholic Church, therefore, is simply a way to say, "I'm a Christian. I've placed my faith in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. As such, I'm now part of His church, the one *Holy Church*." God sees everyone who has professed faith in Christ as Holy, which means we are all part of His holy catholic church.

DAY 2: Being Real is not Weakness

In her audiobook lecture titled *The Power of Vulnerability*, author and researcher Brené Brown notes that the majority of people today view vulnerability as weakness. She says that, in general, when we see somebody else being vulnerable - like somebody sharing about being abused in their childhood - we see them as being brave. But when we have opportunities to be vulnerable, we choose not to share. We'll justify the decision by thinking, "They don't want to hear my sob story," or, "My story isn't nearly as bad as theirs." But these are mere excuses. The reality is that we choose not to share out of fear.

Even though she's not writing from a Christian perspective, Brown's conclusions align well with the Scriptures. The author of Hebrews, for example, writes that we should meet together, and motivate one another, and encourage one another regularly. But to truly encourage one another, we need to fully see and know one another. And to fully know one another, we need to allow our true selves to be seen by others.

To truly *be* the church, therefore, we need to share our real life experiences as well as our current struggles. Only then can we offer real motivation and encouragement to one another.

READING & JOURNALING:

ACTS 2:42-47

What kinds of things do you notice about how the first church lived and interacted *with* one another?

The author of Acts (Luke) doesn't write that this is how all Christians in all cultures should live. Nevertheless, there is a sense of *family* in how the people in the early church lived with one another. Does this passage impact how you understand the idea of *family*?

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, it's clear that those in the early church were united in purpose, but our culture today often advocates an every-man-for-himself way of living. Help me to remember that I am now a member of your family, and that the family of Jesus helps and supports one another. In Jesus' name. Amen.

F260 READING: (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

Read: Isaiah 6 & 9

Journal: Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

READING & JOURNALING:

HEBREWS 10:23-25

Do you feel like others do a good job of encouraging and motivating you on a regular basis? If not, have you considered the possibility that you're not allowing your true self to be seen?

Do you feel like you do a good job of encouraging and motivating others on a regular basis? What steps can you take to truly get to know them so that you may better encourage and motivate them?

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I confess that oftentimes I choose not to be vulnerable because I do see it as weakness. Today has been an excellent reminder that to truly be the church, we must be real about our experiences and our struggles. Help me to use the mess of my life to minister to others. In Jesus' name. Amen.

F260 READING: (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

Read: Isaiah 44 & 45

Journal: Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

DAY 3: The Communion of Saints

To believe in the Holy Catholic Church and the Communion of Saints is to believe that we, quite simply, cannot do life alone. As Albert Mohler writes in *The Apostles' Creed*,

"We are never alone. The thought that we can walk this Christian life alone carries with it a toxicity and poison that has deeply encumbered the American church. This individualism not only betrays the church, it betrays the gospel. It insinuates that the gospel is about God saving people without pointing to a bigger story of God creating a people. From the Old Testament to the New, the covenants, God's purposes, indeed the very creation of the world, all point to God's design of creating a people—a people that will be made up of every tribe, tongue, and nation. By God's grace we come through faith to Christ and thereby stand united as the whole people of God."

Mohler makes an excellent point. The communion of saints is about being God's people, together. We simply weren't created to go it alone.

DAY 4: All of Life is Ministry

For the most part, we live in a culture in which people compartmentalize their lives. While we're at work, that's our work life. While we're at home, that's our family life. While we're at school, that's our school life. While with our friends, that's our social life. While we're at church, that's our spiritual life. We segregate our lives into these areas so that we can pretend to be in control of what's going to happen next.

But the reality is that *most* of life is well outside our control. One thing we can control, however, is understanding that all of life...is ministry.

Think about it. How would your daily life be different if you didn't attempt to have control by segregating your life into different compartments, but instead gave up that sense of control and lived as if *everything* in life is ministry?

Your work life would be your ministry. Your family life would be your ministry. Your school would be your ministry. Your social life would be your ministry. Your hobbies, sports, coaching...everything would be your ministry. This is how the early church lived, and they thrived as a result.

DAY 5: REVIEW

What was your biggest takeaway from this week's teaching — "[I believe in] the holy catholic church; the communion of saints?"

F260 READING: (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

Read: Micah 1:1-16, 4:6-13, 5:1-15

Journal: Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

READING & JOURNALING:

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-26

Which verse in today's reading sticks out to you most? Why do you think that is?

Is there any area in your life right now in which you're trying to "go it alone?" How is that working out for you?

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I know that You have brought others into my life so that I don't have to go it alone, yet it seems like everything within me strives to prove myself. Today, help me to remember that I don't need to do anything to prove myself to You, or others. You have called me loved. You have called me your child. You have called me holy. May I rest in these truths so that I can receive the love and encouragement of others. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

F260 READING: (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

Read: Isaiah 52 & 53

Journal: Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

READING & JOURNALING:

1 PETER 2:9-12

Do you agree that people, in general, separate our lives into compartments in an effort to have control?

Some think they don't have the training for full-time ministry, but Peter writes that, "You are royal priests." Have you considered the possibility that your life may truly thrive by living as if all of life is ministry?

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I confess that I am one who will compartmentalize my life into different segments, yet this pattern of living is not helping me to thrive. Continue to help me see myself as You see me (a royal priest) and to minister to others in all areas of life as a reflection of how You minister to me. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

F260 READING: (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

Read: Isaiah 65 & 66

Journal: Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

I BELIEVE...

DAY 3: Have Mercy on Me, a Sinner

Our News and Media articles today are filled with stories of tragedies, loss, and pain. For our part, it's easy to see or read a news article about a murder, a robbery, or any number of crimes and think to ourselves, "I would never do that. What were they thinking?"

Yet this way of thinking is far more judgmental than we may realize. When these kinds of thoughts come our way, it's important to ask ourselves, "If I lived that person's life, and experienced everything they've experienced, would I have made a different decision in that moment?" The reality is that we don't know, and it's quite possible that we would make the exact same decision.

During the Roman Empire, those who had the job of a Tax Collector were pretty much looked upon as the scum of the earth. Tax Collectors were notoriously ruthless, and would often charge more than the appropriate amount so that their earnings would be higher. People pointed at Tax Collectors regularly thinking, "I would never do that!" But by doing so they were neglecting to realize that their judgmental behavior was just as offensive to God.

DAY 4: The Prodigal Son

Whether your childhood was good or bad, imagine for a moment that your parents were extremely loving and caring. All throughout your childhood your parents may have worked hard, but they also raised you with tremendous wisdom, grace and love.

When the time came for you to go to college, your parents provided everything you would need. Your entire tuition, housing, and food was all covered. In fact, they even threw in a little extra spending money, encouraging you to have time out with your friends.

A couple of years later, while you're still working on your degree, it's your brother's turn to go to college. But he decides he doesn't want to go. Instead, he asks mom and dad to give him his college funds, and he goes out and lives however he pleases. Within a couple of years, he has wasted all of his money on drugs, prostitutes, and other forms of wild living.

Nobody hears from him for a few years, but suddenly he decides to come home. You learn that mom and dad are throwing a celebration in his honor, even spending a chunk of their retirement funds for the party. How do you respond?

DAY 5: REVIEW

What was your biggest takeaway from this week's teaching — "[I believe] in the forgiveness of sins?"

F260 READING: (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

Read: Jeremiah 25 & 29

Journal: Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

READING & JOURNALING:

LUKE 18:9-14, MATTHEW 7:1-5

How regularly do you find yourself looking at the negative actions of others and thinking, "I would never do that?"

"If you lived that person's life, and experienced everything they've experienced, could you know for certain that you would've made a different decision in that moment?"

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I confess there are times when I am more like the Pharisee in Luke 18, saying, "I'm glad I'm not like that person over there!" I'm continually growing to realize that this attitude is a sinful one, and is not the attitude You have called me to have. Have mercy on me, a sinner. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

F260 READING: (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

Read: 2 Kings 22 & 23

Journal: Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

READING & JOURNALING:

If You have been in a Christian church for any length of time, you have almost certainly heard the story of the prodigal son. In fact, it's possible that You've heard it or read it often enough that you feel like there's nothing new to learn from it. Today, take the opportunity to read through this story as if you've never heard it before. **Read LUKE 15:11-32.**

Write out in one sentence the main lesson Jesus was teaching in this story.

How does this lesson continue to apply to your life today?

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, once again I acknowledge how easy it is for me to see the sin in others' lives, yet fail to see the impact sin has had in my own life. Help me to celebrate the victories of others coming to know You, and to celebrate the forgiveness You have provided me! I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

F260 READING: (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

Read: Jeremiah 1:1-3:5

Journal: Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

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Week 9:

...the resurrection of the body;
and the life everlasting. Amen.

DAY 1: The Resurrection of the Body

Throughout this message series we've looked into a number of core teachings of the Christian faith. From God the Father, to Jesus Christ, His death, His resurrection, the Holy Spirit, the holy church, the forgiveness of sins, and more. Yet there are two more lines in the Apostles' Creed that must be covered. The creed ends with, *[I believe in] the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.*

As we begin to dissect these statements, let's go ahead and acknowledge that people, in general, don't like to talk about death. We don't even like to think about death. The fact that you're reading about death at this moment may be causing you a little anxiety. But without death, we would be unable to get into the topic of resurrection. And without resurrection, we would be unable to discuss the victory we have in Christ.

It's worth noting, therefore, that the Apostles' Creed does not end on a somber note about death. Instead, it ends in complete and total celebration. In fact, the end of the Apostles' Creed is so celebratory we ought finish it triumphantly, loudly praising God because we can rest in the confident truth that death has no victory, but Jesus is Victor.

READING & JOURNALING:

**1 CORINTHIANS 15:12-20, 1 CORINTHIANS 15:54-57,
1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-14**

What thoughts came to your mind as you read the end of the devotional today, "... the end of the Apostles' Creed is so celebratory we ought finish it triumphantly, loudly praising God because we can rest in the confident truth that death has no victory, but Jesus is Victor?"

What questions, if any, do you have from today's Scripture reading? Where will you go to find the answers to them?

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I confess that I may loudly shout during moments of excitement and celebration, but I don't always think excited or celebratory thoughts while reading the Apostles' Creed. May the truths of Your Word give me a new perspective on what's *really* worth celebrating. Amen.

F260 READING: (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

Read: Jeremiah 31:31-40, 32, & 33

Journal: Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

DAY 2: The Beauty of Baptism

There are a number of notable baptisms throughout the New Testament. Jesus begins His ministry being baptized by John the Baptist. Later, in Acts 2, the Apostle Peter preaches the first message after Jesus' death and resurrection and 3,000 people believe in Christ and are baptized. Later still, Paul, who initially hated Christians, has his own conversion experience and is baptized.

Throughout the Scriptures, there aren't any passages that indicate baptism is a requirement for salvation. Ephesians 2 is quite clear in saying that we are saved by God's grace, not from anything we can do on our own (that includes being baptized). Yet, baptism is still a beautiful part of the Christian life, because it symbolizes the topic of resurrection so well.

When somebody chooses to be baptized, they are publicly expressing that they have *died* to sin, and been *raised* to life through faith in Christ. Their old life is gone, and their new life has begun. It's a declaration that death has been defeated.

In short, baptism is an outward expression of an inward reality. *Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven.* (Colossians 3:1)

READING & JOURNALING:

COLOSSIANS 3:1-11, ROMANS 6:1-14

If you've been baptized, what is most memorable to you about that experience?

What do you find most enjoyable about baptism services?

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, today I simply want to thank You for Your saving grace. There are many times I tell myself I need to do more to earn your love, but Your Word tells me that You loved me so much Christ gave His life for me. There's nothing more I can do for Your love, because You've already given it so freely! May I rest in this truth each and every day. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

F260 READING: (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

Read: Jeremiah 52, 2 Kings 24 & 25

Journal: Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

DAY 3: The Life Everlasting

The human mind, as spectacular as it may be, still has its limits. We can create algorithms and equations that will propel computers - and perhaps one day, people - to Mars. We can build a building that is over 2,7000 feet high. Looking at our accomplishments through the years, it would be easy to assume there isn't anything we can't do.

But one thing we just can't comprehend is eternity. It's just impossible to wrap our minds around it. Still, despite our limited capacity to grasp eternity, the Scriptures are clear in stating that we have an eternal future.

- "In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?" (John 14:2)
- "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." (Rev. 21:4)
- "But, as it is written, 'What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him.'" (1 Cor. 2:9)

READING & JOURNALING:

REVELATION 21:1-8

How regularly do you take time to think about the everlasting life that is to come?

Some people like to think about eternal life as something that begins after death, but God's Word tells us that our eternal life begins immediately after placing our faith in Christ. What thoughts come to your mind when you hear, "Your eternal life - life everlasting - has already begun?"

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I confess there are times when I think about my eternal life beginning after my earthly death, and it's refreshing to be reminded that my eternal life has *already* begun. Today, I simply want to celebrate this truth and live with the expectant hope of life everlasting. Amen.

F260 READING: (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

Read: Ezekiel 1:1-3, 36:16-38, & 37

Journal: Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

DAY 4: Amen - So Be It

Years ago, a small group of people known as South Ridge Church began a ministry in a small town in West Virginia. Through a stroke of God's grace, we were able to meet in a facility that allowed us to grow the ministry. The carpet and pews were an odd shade of burnt orange, yet we couldn't have asked for a better location to meet. Over time, the people of South Ridge Church came together with the hope of building a facility that would allow the ministry to grow.

During this campaign, which we named *Making Ripples*, the people of SRC took the opportunity to write out prayers for the future of the ministry. Before doing so, Pastor Seth taught a brief message on the word *Amen*. Like many Christians, we would use this word at the end of our prayers, but what exactly does *Amen* mean? Pulling material from other biblical scholars, Seth noted that *Amen* may best be translated, "So be it." Other translations include, "It is so."

Having the Apostles' Creed end with the word *Amen*, therefore, has a profound meaning. It's a way for the person reciting it to end on a note of hope. It's as if they're saying, "I believe all these things, it is so, and it will always be so."

READING & JOURNALING:

Take the opportunity to read through the Apostles' Creed on your own, but out loud today. A copy of the creed is available on the back of the first page of this reading guide.

What has been your biggest takeaway from this message series on the Apostles' Creed?

Are there any specific ways this series has impacted the way you see how your beliefs lead to your values and your behaviors?

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, even though the Apostles' Creed is over 1,600 years old, the truths contained within it are timeless. My desire is that these truths will be seeded deep within me, so that these beliefs transform me into the person You have made me to be. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

F260 READING: (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

Read: Daniel 1 & 2

Journal: Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

DAY 5: REVIEW

What was your biggest takeaway from this week's teaching — "[I believe in] the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting?"

F260 READING: (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

Read: Daniel 3 & 4

Journal: Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

I BELIEVE...

I BELIEVE IN GOD, THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH. I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST, HIS ONLY SON, OUR LORD, WHO WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY, DESCENDED TO SEATED AT THE DEAD. I BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY, AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING. AMEN.

Journal: Dig Deeper into God's Word

Read the F260 passages for the day, and then **Reflect** and **Respond** to the passage by answering the questions provided below.

7 ARROWS of BIBLE READING

What does this passage say?



What did this passage mean to its original audience?



What does this passage tell us about God?



What does this passage tell us about man?



What does this passage demand of me?



How does this passage change the way I relate to people?



What does this passage prompt me to pray to God?

