

The background of the cover is a photograph of a misty forest. In the foreground, there is a rocky outcrop with some green vegetation. A single, tall evergreen tree stands prominently on the left side. The middle ground is filled with a dense forest of evergreen trees, partially obscured by a thick layer of mist or fog. The sky is a uniform, light grey color, suggesting an overcast day.

ROOTS

SIX WEEK GROUP STUDY GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever witnessed someone who seemed to have a rock-solid, unshakable faith? Like whatever was thrown their way, they never wavered or wondered?

Or wandered.

Your faith in God matters to God. In fact, God is most honored through a living, active, death-defying, out-of-the-box faith. And he's committed to growing it. Big. Imagine how different your outlook on life would be if you had absolute confidence that God was with you. Imagine how differently you would respond to difficulties, temptations, and even good things if you knew with certainty that God was in fact, "working it ALL FOR GOOD". In this series, *Roots*, we'll discover the five ways God grows our faith big.

I invite you to not journey alone, but together in a group. *Roots* is much more than a Study. It's six weeks of aligning our Sundays, weekly group meetings, and daily devotions all for one purpose: that our faith will grow big and our church will grow deep.

God's not done, Pastor Scott

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HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

Life is not meant to be lived alone. You were created to experience life with other people, and that's why we encourage you to join a group (see Appendix on page 30) and go through this booklet together.

The weekly studies in this guide correspond with video lessons found at **www.brooklake.org/groups**. These should be watched prior to discussing the questions for each week.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Come to group prepared to engage. You'll get much more out of your time together if you participate. Hosts will not be lecturing. Instead, he or she will be encouraging group members to discuss what they are learning.
2. Be sensitive to others in group. Everyone's at a different point in their journey. You'll be surprised at the insights you'll learn from each other.
3. As you begin each study, pray (individually or together) that God will speak to you through his Word.
4. Keep a Bible on hand. There will be times for the group to read passages together during the studies. If you don't have a Bible and would like one, Brooklake has free Bibles available every weekend. Also, there are a lot of really great Bible apps out there for phones and tablets.

5. Take notes! It will help you remember discussion, thoughts, and ideas for further application in daily life.
6. As a group, you do not have to answer every question, every week. Some weeks you may get through everything; some weeks may require a little more time on specific questions. That's okay. Be responsive to the pace your group is needing to set each meeting.
7. What happens in group, stays in group. Anything said in group should be considered confidential unless specific permission is given to share it with others.
8. Have fun, be authentic, and learn from each other.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

www.brooklake.org/groups

Join a group or start a group (see also: Appendix)

www.scottharris.org

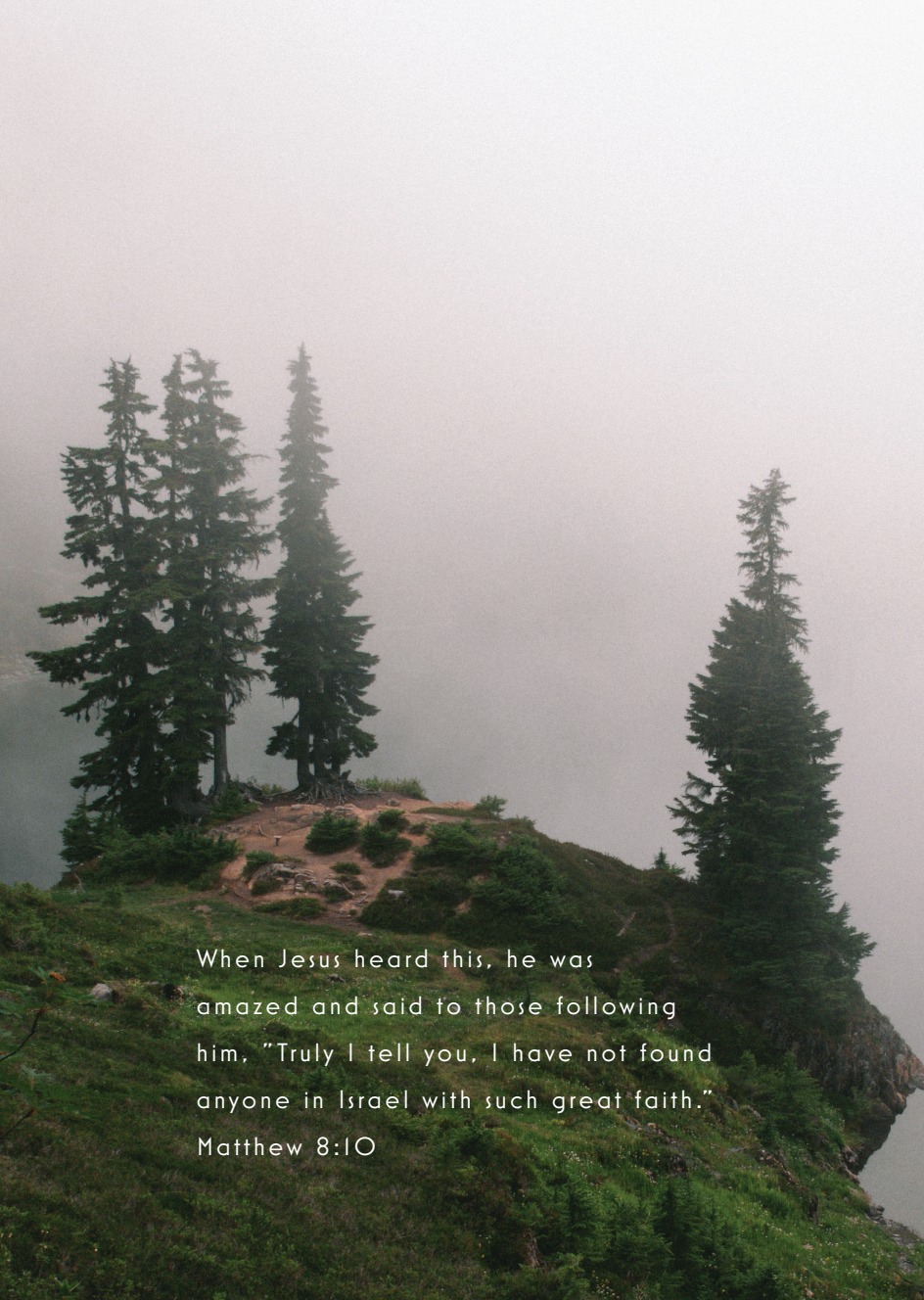
Daily devotionals by Pastor Scott Harris

www.youversion.com/apps

The Bible with you wherever you go

ROOTS

SIX WEEK GROUP STUDY GUIDE

A photograph of a mountain peak shrouded in mist. The foreground is a grassy slope leading up to a rocky, sandy summit. Several tall, dark evergreen trees stand prominently on the peak. The background is a thick, white fog that obscures the surrounding landscape. The overall mood is serene and quiet.

When Jesus heard this, he was
amazed and said to those following
him, "Truly I tell you, I have not found
anyone in Israel with such great faith."
Matthew 8:10

ROOTS

WEEK 1 :: BIG GOD, BIG FAITH

Imagine how different your outlook on life would be if you had absolute confidence that God was with you. Imagine how differently you would respond to difficulties, temptations, and even good things if you knew with certainty that God was in all of it and was planning to leverage it for good. In other words, imagine what it would be like to have Big Faith.

READ

5 When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. 6 "Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralyzed, suffering terribly." 7 Jesus said to him, "Shall I come and heal him?" 8 The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. 9 For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." 10 When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. Matthew 8:5-10

DISCUSS

1. Do you know people whose faith in God is so strong that at times you would describe it as amazing? What is it about them that makes you think their confidence in God is so strong?
2. How would you describe the relationship between obedience and trust?
3. As you think back on your childhood, how was the obedience/trust relationship manifested in your home? Did you trust your parents? How did that impact your response to their authority?
4. What is more important in a relationship: trust or obedience?
5. Has there ever been a time in your life when your confidence in God—your faith— hit a really low point?
6. Based on this discussion, what advice would you give a friend who had lost faith or who would describe his or her faith as weak?

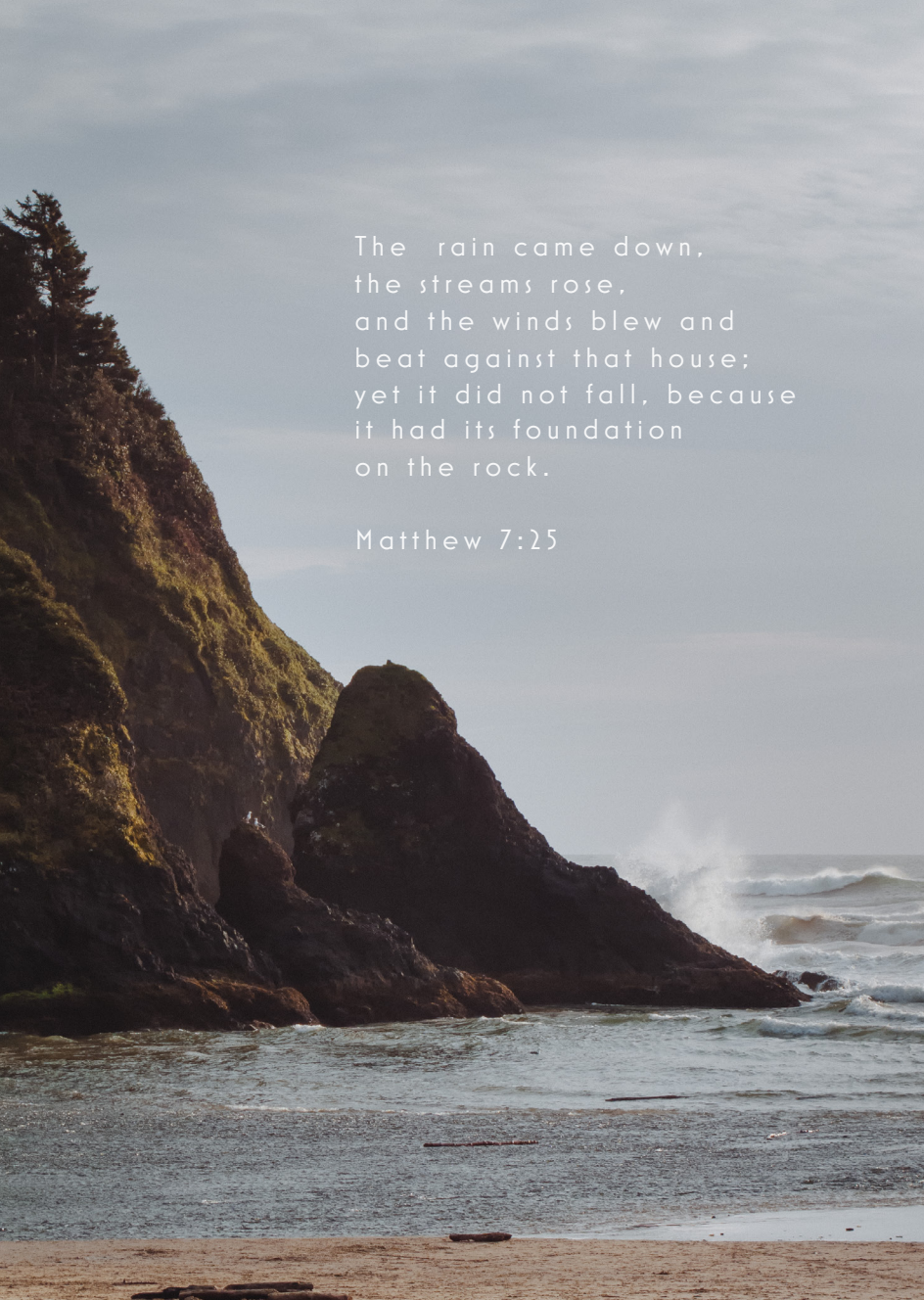
APPLY

Sermons come in all shapes and sizes, but if you listen closely, you'll hear God saying the same thing in most sermons — "Trust me." That's not to say that the message in the Bible is shallow and simplistic. Rather, in all the ways you could respond to God, the most important thing that God is asking you to do is to trust him.

When things are going well, it doesn't require a lot of faith to trust God. But when life turns messy, is your faith leading you to depend on God, or do you put your trust in something else?

In the next several weeks, we'll discuss five catalysts God uses to build that kind of faith. For this week, reflect on what have been the most faith-building events/relationships in your life. How have these things affected your confidence in God?

NOTES



The rain came down,
the streams rose,
and the winds blew and
beat against that house;
yet it did not fall, because
it had its foundation
on the rock.

Matthew 7:25

ROOTS

WEEK 2 :: PRACTICE MAKES PROGRESS

It's one thing to know a lot about weightlifting and another thing to actually lift weights. It's one thing to know a lot about nutrition and another thing to eat healthy. Similarly, it's one thing to know a lot about the Bible and another thing to actually live out what it teaches. That's why the Christian life isn't just about knowledge. It's when our acts of faith intersect with God's faithfulness that our faith grows big. From Jesus' parable of the wise and foolish builders, we discover that hearing and learning are not enough. The value is in the application, because, in the end, it's obedience that makes all the difference.

READ

24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.
25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.
27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash." 28 When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching.
Matthew 7:24-28

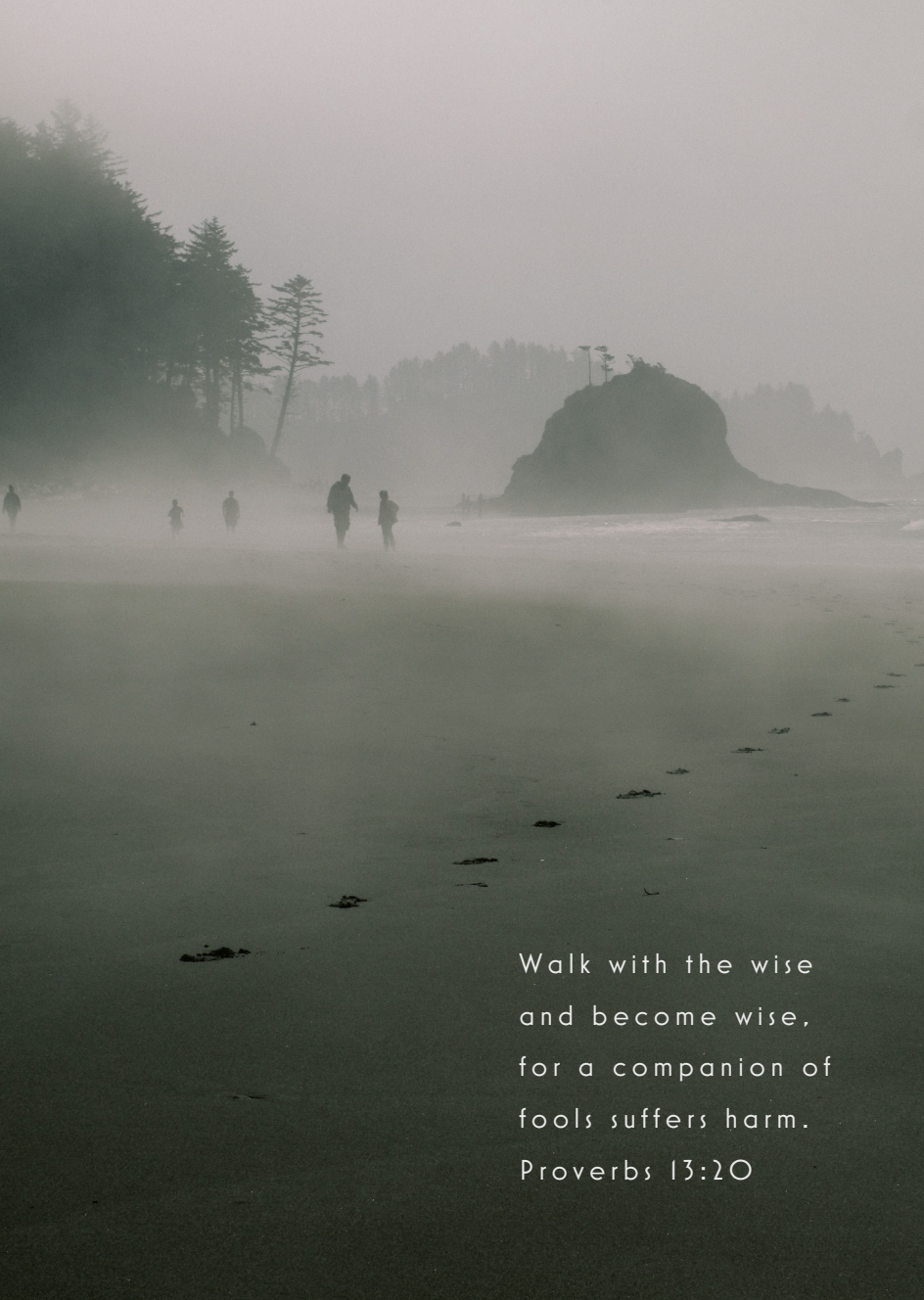
DISCUSS

1. Did you grow up attending a church that emphasized application? If not, what was emphasized in your church? Doctrine? Sacraments? Attendance?
2. This story follows Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Why do you think Jesus concluded his sermon with this story?
3. What is the parallel between "...and puts them into practice" in verse 24 and "... had its foundation on the rock" in verse 25?
4. In verse 27, Jesus said that the foolish man's house fell with a great crash. Chances are you know individuals or couples whose lives or marriages could be described in similar terms. Without giving names or too many specifics, describe a situation.
5. Have you ever applied a specific teaching of Scripture that, looking back, prepared you for an unexpected storm?

APPLY

“Un-applied truth is like paint. It doesn’t do anybody any good until it is applied.” We can be the most learned of believers, but if our knowledge doesn’t move us toward application, then our faith will wither. The Bible challenges us to respond to God’s truth in many different ways: love your enemies, show forgiveness, and practice generosity. What have been the most difficult truths from the Bible for you to apply? This week, identify two areas of your life where a bit more application would make a noticeable difference. And then apply.

NOTES



Walk with the wise
and become wise,
for a companion of
fools suffers harm.
Proverbs 13:20

ROOTS

WEEK 3 :: CHOOSE WISELY

If you are like most people, you can't tell your life story without referencing people who played significant roles along the way. The same is true of your faith story. In this third week of Roots, we discuss the role that good and healthy relationships play in the development of our faith.

READ

13 Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm. Proverbs 13:20

Biblically speaking, a fool is someone who knows the difference between right and wrong, but doesn't care. A wise person is one who knows the difference and seeks to do what is right. Fools see life as disconnected. They live as if today's decisions will have no impact on tomorrow. A wise person understands that life is connected and that today's decisions have the potential to create tomorrow's reality.

DISCUSS

1. What is the promise to those who "walk" with the wise?
2. What is the consequence of being a companion of fools?
3. Based on your experiences, why do you think Solomon highlights what a person becomes (i.e., "wise") in the first half of the verse, while he highlights what will happen (i.e., "suffering harm") in the second half?
4. Looking back, are there people you feel God providentially (helpful, in good time) brought into your life at crucial times? Who? How did God use them? If you have children, have you seen God providentially bring someone into your children's lives?

"Your friends will determine the direction and quality of your life."
5. Was that true for you when you were in school? Is it still true, or as true for you, now that you are in a different stage of life?

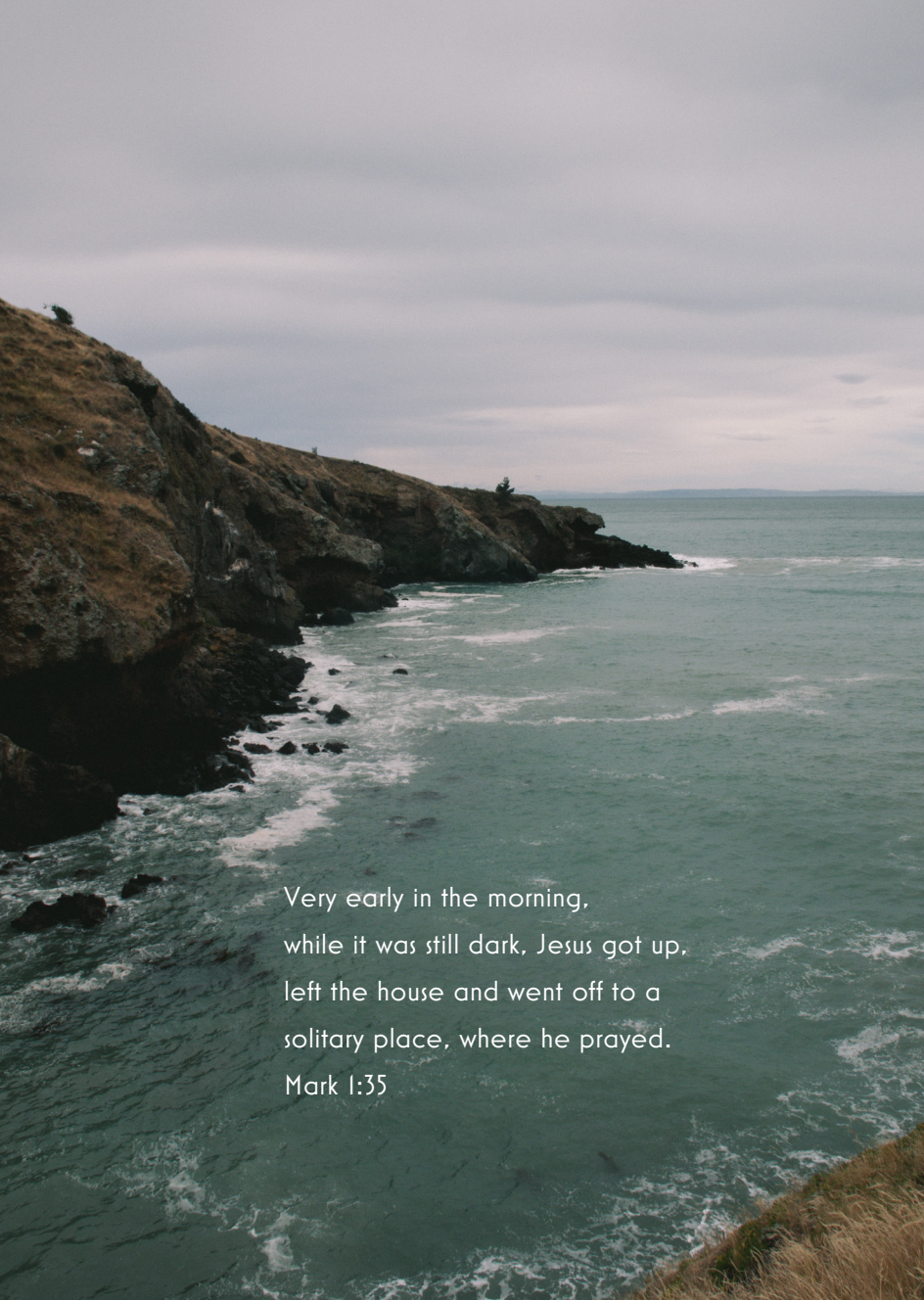
APPLY

The promise from Proverbs 13:20 can be read alongside a similar warning from the New Testament: Bad company corrupts good character (1 Corinthians 15:33). The Bible makes it clear that certain relationships are pivotal in our spiritual development, while others can lead us in directions we never intended to go.

But we don't live in a vacuum. We're surrounded by wisdom and foolishness from all sides.

Is it possible to completely ignore the companionship of fools? Should you? How do you balance the relationships in your life that strengthen your faith and the relationships that could inhibit your spiritual growth, knowing full well that these relationships could also be pivotal for others to draw closer to God?

NOTES



Very early in the morning,
while it was still dark, Jesus got up,
left the house and went off to a
solitary place, where he prayed.
Mark 1:35

ROOTS

WEEK 4 :: TWO CATALYSTS

Since strong human relationships are held together through discipline and self-control, we should not be too surprised to discover that our relationship with God requires the element of discipline as well. This week, you will be introduced to the role private spiritual disciplines play in the development of our faith. Drawing from Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, this message emphasizes how God leverages systematic prayer and generosity to grow our confidence in him.

READ

“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. 2 “So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 5 “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. Matthew 6:1-6

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. Mark 1:35

DISCUSS

1. When it comes to discipline, where do you struggle most?
2. Can you think of disciplines you've developed that have strengthened your relationships with those you care about most?
3. How easy is it for you to be generous when confronted with a specific need? Why?
4. Which is easier, praying consistently or giving consistently? Why?
5. Why do you think Jesus instructs us to pray privately on a regular basis?

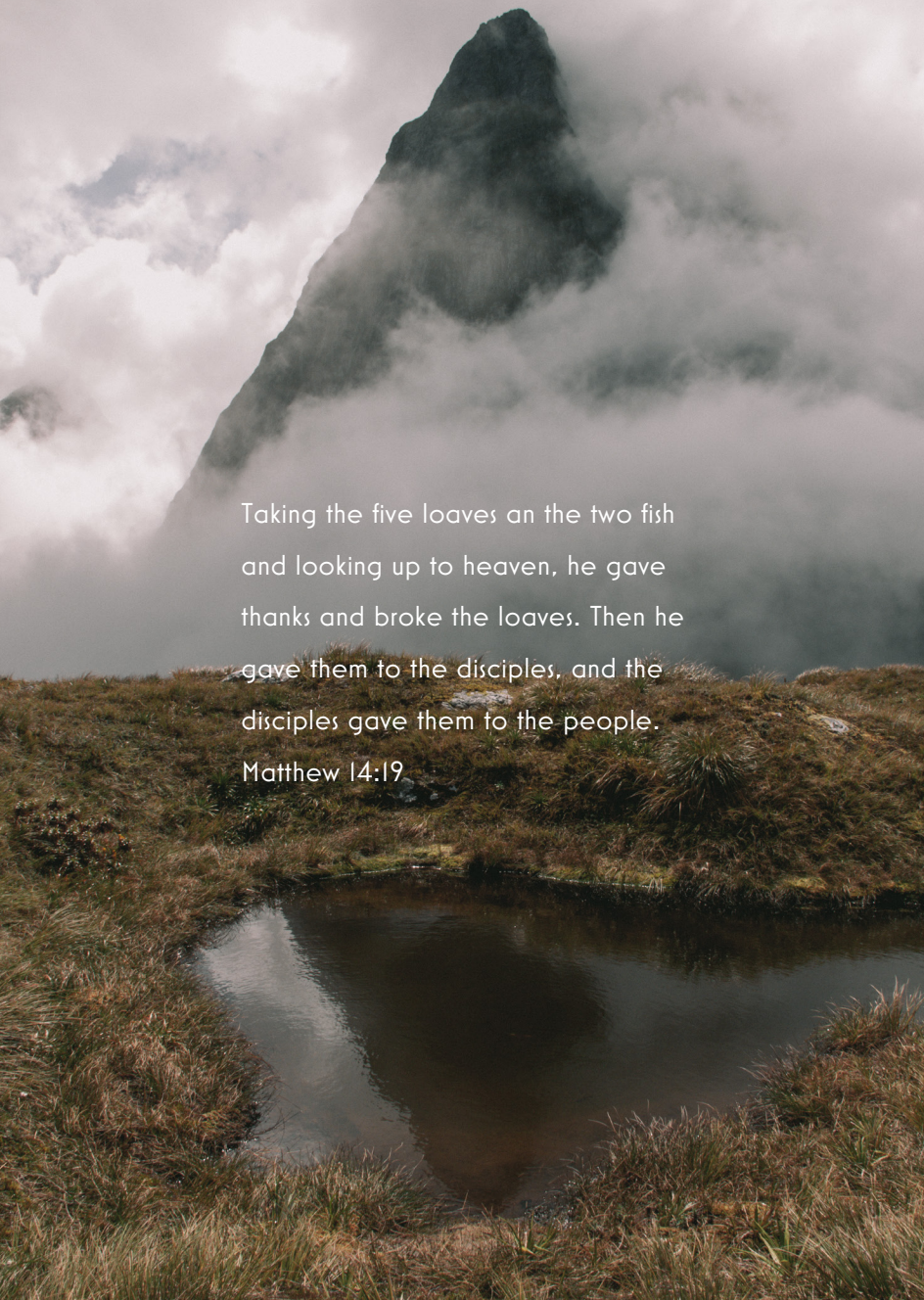
APPLY

The notion of a discipline being essential to an authentic, heart-felt relationship may seem strange. After all, discipline is about routine. A relationship is fluid. But if you think about it, every healthy relationship is held together partly by disciplined actions and routines.

Perhaps the easiest way to understand the importance of discipline in a relationship is to consider a relationship without boundaries. All self-imposed boundaries are a form of discipline. Imagine a marriage in which neither partner practices self-control. The marriage would eventually deteriorate.

Our relationship with God shares a similar dynamic. Abandoning these practices leaves God at the periphery of our lives. Regularly practicing these disciplines, however, draw us into a closer, more intimate, more dependent relationship with our Heavenly Father. What will you do this week to establish both giving and prayer as a regular discipline?

NOTES



Taking the five loaves and the two fish
and looking up to heaven, he gave
thanks and broke the loaves. Then he
gave them to the disciples, and the
disciples gave them to the people.
Matthew 14:19

ROOTS

WEEK 5 :: UNQUALIFIED

There are dynamics God uses to build our faith. Growing faith is the essence of a growing relationship with Christ. Tension often surfaces when we feel God is urging us to serve in a setting for which we feel ill-equipped or inadequate. If you have ever volunteered to do something for which you felt totally unqualified, then you already know what an experience like that can do for your faith. One of the primary ways God grows our faith is through personal ministry. This week we will explore the relationship between our faith and our service to others.

READ

13 When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. 14 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. 15 As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food." 16 Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." 17 "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered. 18 "Bring them here to me," he said. 19 And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. 20 They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve baskets full of broken pieces that were left over. 21 The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children. Matthew 14:13-21

DISCUSS

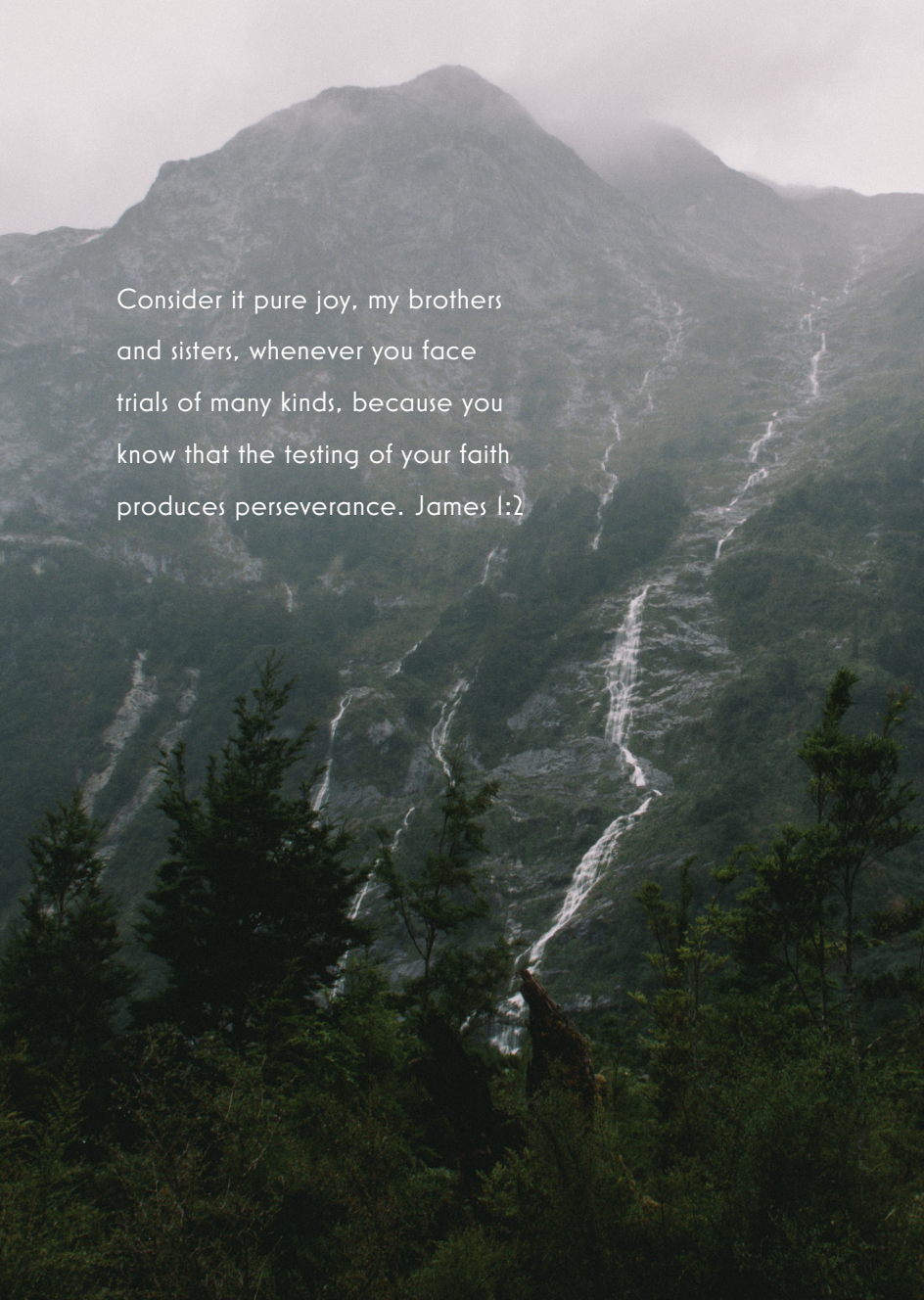
1. The disciples used the size of the crowd and their lack of food as excuses to not do what Jesus asked. What excuses have you used?
2. As you consider the disciples' excuses, what were they forgetting to factor into the equation?
3. Have you ever sensed God was urging you to do something, yet you refused to do it because you felt inadequate or unprepared? If so, what was it? Why did you refuse?
4. What opportunities do you sense God opening for you to practice an act of personal ministry?

APPLY

Personal ministry enables us to experience God's power in our weakness. We may feel illequipped and unprepared, but these opportunities are incredibly rich experiences through which God grows our faith. At first, you may perform an act of personal ministry or service in order to benefit someone else. In hindsight, though, most people feel like they are the ones that have benefited the most.

Identify a skill, talent, or experience (your fish and loaves) to exercise this week as a measure of personal ministry. You're invited to pray a sentence prayer making this skill, talent, or experience available to God to use as he sees fit. Or simply express your availability to God to be used in his service.

NOTES



Consider it pure joy, my brothers
and sisters, whenever you face
trials of many kinds, because you
know that the testing of your faith
produces perseverance. James 1:2

ROOTS

WEEK 6 :: SUCKER PUNCHED

Life is full of surprises - some good, some not so good. But each unexpected event which comes our way is actually a divine opportunity. There are dynamics God uses to build our faith. Growing faith is the essence of a growing relationship with Christ. This week, we'll discover the role that unpleasant and unplanned circumstances play in the development of our confidence in God.

READ

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. James 1:2-4

DISCUSS

1. James says that trials test our faith, or confidence in God. How is a trial a test of our faith?
2. James says the goal of these tests is "perseverance." The implication is that trials can create persevering faith in God. But why trials? Can you think of other ways God could create persevering faith in us?
3. Give a brief example of an event or set of circumstances that led to feelings of helplessness or being out of control. The event can be positive or negative.
4. As you think back on this incident, what role did God play in your thoughts? Did you pray? Did you pray differently? Were you angry?
5. Would you say this event strengthened or weakened your confidence in God? Why?

APPLY

Often times, what shapes our response to pivotal circumstances is the support that we have around us during these experiences. Is there a community? . . . Are there providential relationships? . . . Do these relationships help us frame these circumstances in a way for us to see that God is not doing something to us, but is doing something in us and through us? With that in mind, we are invited to pray for individuals or couples in group who are currently facing a faith-stretching trial.

NOTES

APPENDIX:

GROUPS

JOIN, START OF HOST A GROUP

BROOKLAKE.ORG/GROUPS

JOIN A GROUP

Life is not meant to be lived alone. You were created to experience life with other people, and that's why we encourage you to join a group. Groups are a great way to spend time with people, grow spiritually, and serve those around us. So, how do you join a group?

It's simple... Go to www.brooklake.org/groups, find one that fits your schedule, sign up, and attend. You can also start your own group any time. Find a few people you know and ask them to hang out with you for six weeks to study the lessons in this guide. Congratulations! You've joined a group.

HOST A GROUP

Do you like hosting people? Are you looking to get connected with others and begin to grow in your faith at the same time? It sounds like you could be great at starting a group by being a Group Host. H.O.S.T.s have a:

- H**eat for people and are willing to
- O**pen their homes,
- S**erve a snack, and
- T**urn on a lesson.

Knowing that you have a heart to host, how do you get started? As shared above, we like to say that the first step is to find two or three people you know and ask them to hang out with you for six weeks to study the lessons in this guide.

As a Group Host, you're not expected to know all the answers or fill the role of be-all, end-all for your group members. You're there to open your home, turn on a lesson and use the questions in this study guide as a way of facilitating a group discussion.

Beyond that, ask yourself these questions:

1. What demographic do I want to serve?
2. How many people can I host?
3. Where and when will we meet?
4. Who of my other acquaintances (friends, family, neighbors) can I invite?

Once you have those questions answered, let Brooklake know about your group so we can post it online. This gives other people an easy opportunity to join with you during your group journey. Fill out Brooklake's Host Application at **brooklake.org/groups**.

For questions or more info contact us at **groups@brooklake.org**.

BROOKLAKE.ORG / GROUPS

And I pray that you, being rooted and
established in love, may have power,
together with all the Lord's holy people,
to grasp how wide and long and high and
deep is the love of Christ, and to know
this love that surpasses knowledge, that you
may be filled to the measure of all the
fullness of God. Ephesians 3:17-19

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