

This guide is an invitation to follow Jesus with greater purpose and hope. It will help you to explore the scriptures and challenge you to live out your faith. Each week we'd love for you to think about how you relate: **Up** (with God), **In** (with church) and **Out** (with neighbors).



Weekly Questions:

- How is God getting my attention? For help, think about these areas:
- How are you living up with God?
- How are you living in community with other followers of Jesus?
- How are you living out on mission with your neighbors?
- What are you going to do about it?

From Garden to Garden

Genesis 1:1-2:3

- **The Design of Shalom: Order from Chaos.** In the beginning, the earth was "formless and empty," a dark and chaotic void. Yet, the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. God speaks into this chaos, not to destroy it, but to bring order, light, and life. This is the design of *Shalom*—a world in harmony where everything has its place. Creation is an act of God's generous love. He creates a space for us to exist and thrive in unhindered communion with God. Where in your life right now does it feel "formless and empty"? How does it change your perspective to know that God's Spirit is hovering even over the chaotic and dark spaces of your story?
- **The Rhythm of Goodness: Evening and Morning.** Throughout the creation story, we see a consistent rhythm: "And there was evening, and there was morning." Six times, God pauses to look at what He has made and declares, "It is good." The rhythm of the world is rooted in this fundamental goodness and purposeful progression. We often focus so much on what is broken that we forget the world was spoken into existence as "good." How often do you pause in your "evening and morning" to acknowledge the goodness of God's creation? Are you more inclined to see the world as a place of scarcity or a place of God's "good" abundance?
- **The Gift of Creation.** The story of Genesis 1 doesn't end with the creation of humanity; it ends with the Sabbath. God rests, not because he is tired, but to inhabit the world God has made. Being made in the "image of God" means we are created to reflect God's character and join in this rhythm of work and rest. What does sabbath or rest look like in your life? How does sabbath challenge your current pace of life? If the goal of creation is to live in communion with God, how are you prioritizing "being" over "doing" this week?
- **Practice: Living Creatively with God**

In creation, God brings beauty out of nothingness. As people made in His image, we are called to be co-creators who bring the "rhythm of goodness" into our everyday environments. This week, practice living the *Shalom* of the garden through these intentional acts:

- **Audit the Gravesites:** Identify one area of your life (your schedule, a room in your house, or a messy relationship) that feels chaotic. Intentionally invite the Spirit to "hover" there, and take one small step to bring order and peace to that space.
- **The Goodness Recognition:** Once a day, stop and name one thing that is "good." It could be as mundane as a meal, a sunset, or a kind word. Acknowledge God as the source of that goodness.
- **Inhabit the Rest:** Set aside a specific block of time this week—even if just an hour—to practice "Sabbath." Put away your tools and your screens, and simply delight in being a child of God in the good world.
- **How will you live creatively with God this week, trusting that God's rhythm of goodness is still at work in you?**