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ECHO CHAMBER
VOL. 02

LOVE

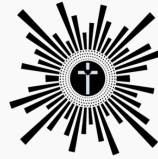
EXPLORING SPIRITUALITY

We love because he first loved us. – 1 John 4:19





Seventh-day Adventist Church
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Prepared by Youth & Young Adult Ministries

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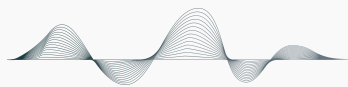
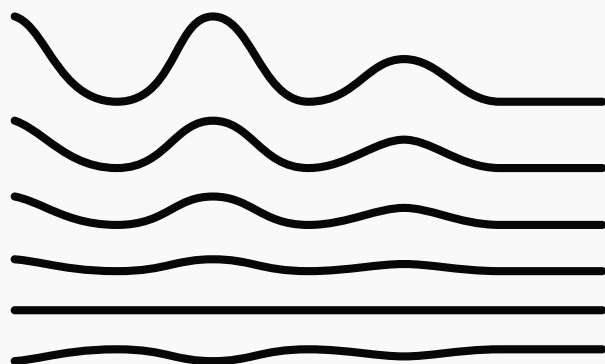
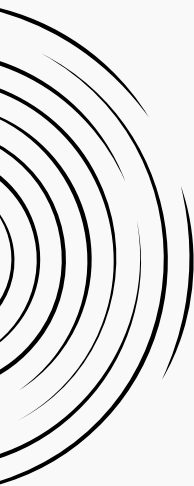


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INTRODUCTION



In this volume, we delve into the very essence of spirituality: **Love**. Our purpose is simple yet profound: to guide you toward meeting Jesus in a way that ignites a passionate and transformative love within your heart

As you engage with these five lessons, we pray that you'll:

- Uncover your deepest longings and discover how Jesus satisfies them.
- Identify the influences that shape your spiritual life and learn to prioritize your connection with God.
- Develop an authentic and vibrant that empowers you to live a life of purpose.
- Cultivate compassion and center yourself in the peace of Christ, allowing His love to flow through you to others.

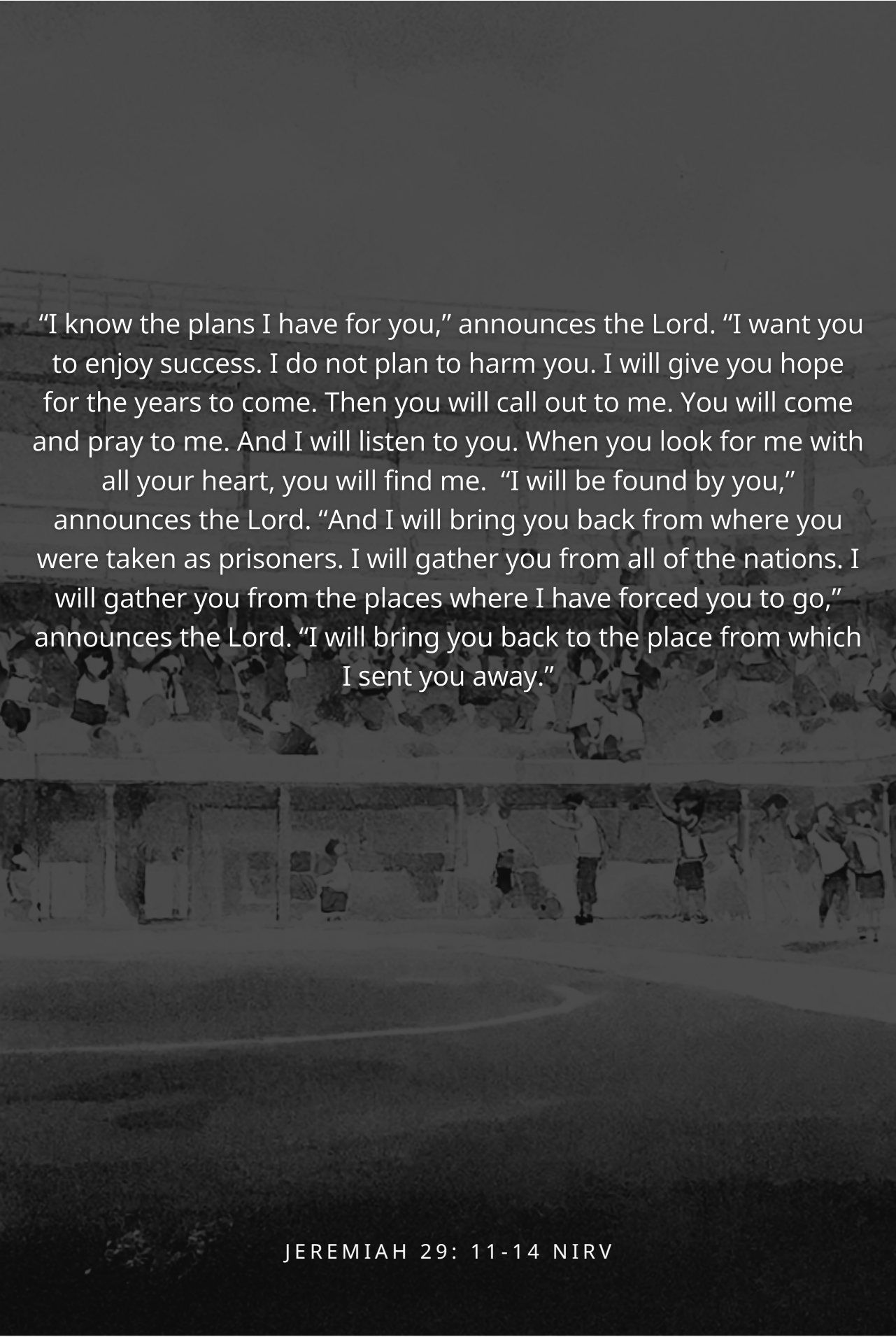
Our ultimate desire is that through this study, you will not only learn about Jesus but also encounter Him personally. That you'll fall in love with His grace, His truth, and His unwavering presence in your life.

May the Holy Spirit illuminate your path, soften your heart, and draw you closer to the Savior who loves you beyond measure.

With love and anticipation,

Juan, Andrew, Hannah

Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
Youth and Young Adult Ministries

A dark, grayscale photograph of a large crowd of people, possibly at a sports event, with a baseball field visible in the foreground. The image is dimly lit, with the crowd appearing as a textured mass of light and dark shapes. The baseball field in the foreground is dark and mostly obscured by shadows.

"I know the plans I have for you," announces the Lord. "I want you to enjoy success. I do not plan to harm you. I will give you hope for the years to come. Then you will call out to me. You will come and pray to me. And I will listen to you. When you look for me with all your heart, you will find me. "I will be found by you," announces the Lord. "And I will bring you back from where you were taken as prisoners. I will gather you from all of the nations. I will gather you from the places where I have forced you to go," announces the Lord. "I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you away."

JEREMIAH 29: 11-14 NIRV

1. WHY AM I HERE?

PASSAGE:

Jeremiah 29:11-14

THEME:

Discovering your God-given purpose as a foundation for a relationship with Jesus.

KEY VERSE:

Jeremiah 29:11 - "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'"

INTRODUCTION:

Discuss the historical context of Jeremiah 29:11. Explain that this was a message of hope to the Israelites in exile, reminding them that God had not forgotten them and had a plan for their restoration. Youth and young adults often feel uncertain about their future. They may face pressures to conform to societal expectations or pursue paths that don't align with their passions or values. By understanding that God has a plan for them, they can find hope and direction, even in the midst of uncertainty.

Start by asking the group: "If a movie was made about your life, what would the main character try to achieve? What motivates them?". Acknowledge that many young people grapple with questions of identity and direction. Connect this to the idea that God has a specific purpose for each person.

ENGAGE WITH SCRIPTURE

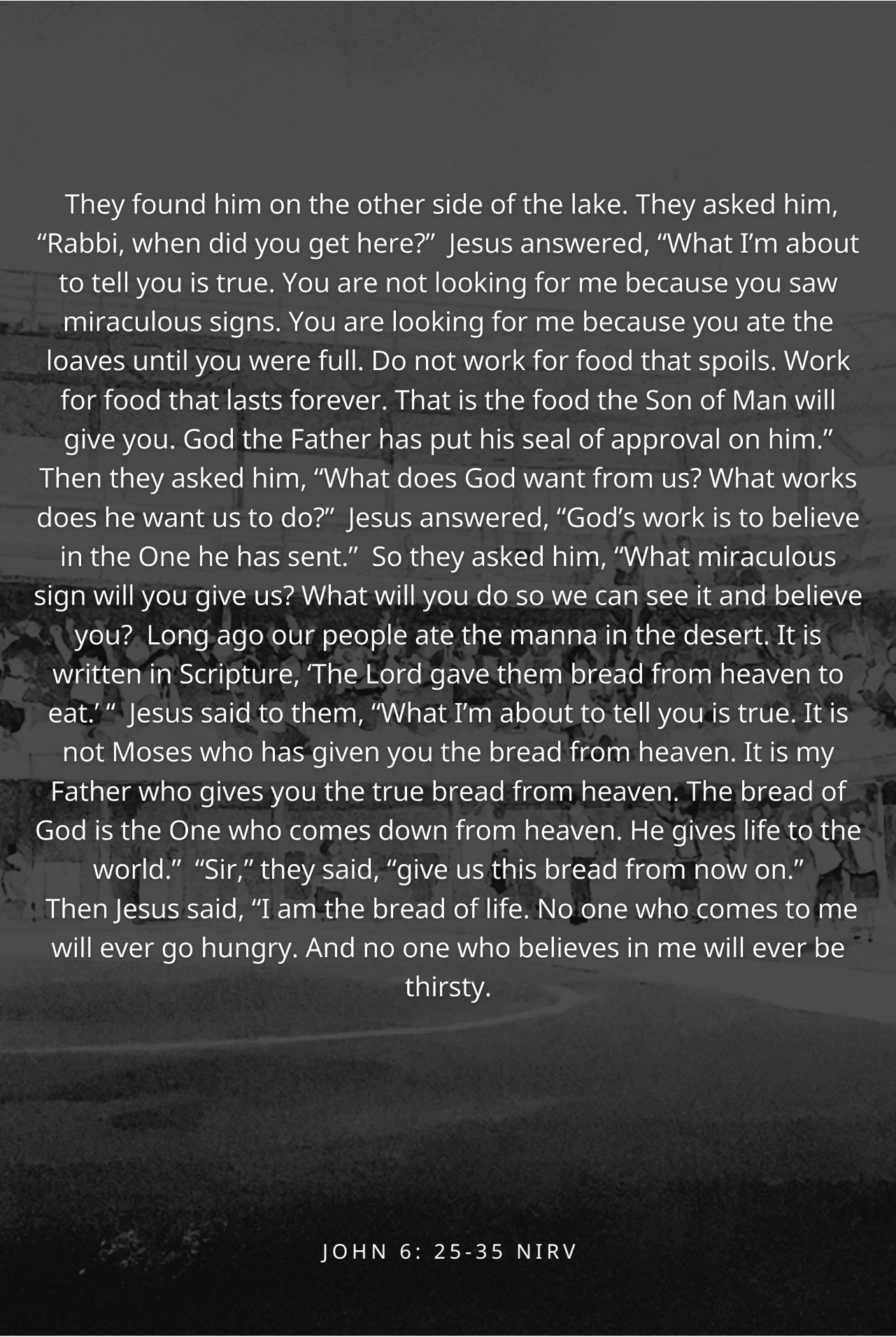
Read Jeremiah 29:11-14. Ask group members to identify the promises that God makes in this passage. What does it mean to "seek" God, and what is the promised result?

DISCUSSION:

- What are some common misconceptions about finding your purpose?
- How can we discern God's calling in our lives?
- What steps can we take to align our goals with God's will?
- How does knowing that God has a plan for you affect your view on life's challenges?

APPLICATION:

- Encourage group members to reflect on their talents, passions, and values. Ask them to write down a personal mission statement that reflects their desire to serve God and make a difference in the world.
- Closing Activity Options: **Vision Board** - Have participants create a collage representing their dreams and aspirations, focusing on how they can use their gifts for God's glory.
- Prayer of Dedication: Close with a prayer where students surrender their plans to God and ask for guidance in fulfilling His purpose for their lives.



They found him on the other side of the lake. They asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" Jesus answered, "What I'm about to tell you is true. You are not looking for me because you saw miraculous signs. You are looking for me because you ate the loaves until you were full. Do not work for food that spoils. Work for food that lasts forever. That is the food the Son of Man will give you. God the Father has put his seal of approval on him." Then they asked him, "What does God want from us? What works does he want us to do?" Jesus answered, "God's work is to believe in the One he has sent." So they asked him, "What miraculous sign will you give us? What will you do so we can see it and believe you? Long ago our people ate the manna in the desert. It is written in Scripture, 'The Lord gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" Jesus said to them, "What I'm about to tell you is true. It is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven. It is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. The bread of God is the One who comes down from heaven. He gives life to the world." "Sir," they said, "give us this bread from now on." Then Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. No one who comes to me will ever go hungry. And no one who believes in me will ever be thirsty.

2. THE HUNGERS OF MY LIFE

PASSAGE:

John 6:25-35

THEME:

Recognizing and satisfying the deep longings of the soul through a relationship with Jesus.

KEY VERSE:

John 6:35 - "Then Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'"

INTRODUCTION:

Begin by acknowledging that all humans have deep "heart hungers" or longings that are difficult to fill. Ask: "What do you crave the most – whether it's success, love, acceptance, or something else?" Explain that these hungers, while natural, can lead us astray if we seek to satisfy them in the wrong places.

Discuss the context of John 6:35. Explain that Jesus made this statement after feeding the 5,000, using the physical hunger of the crowd as a metaphor for spiritual hunger.

ENGAGE WITH SCRIPTURE

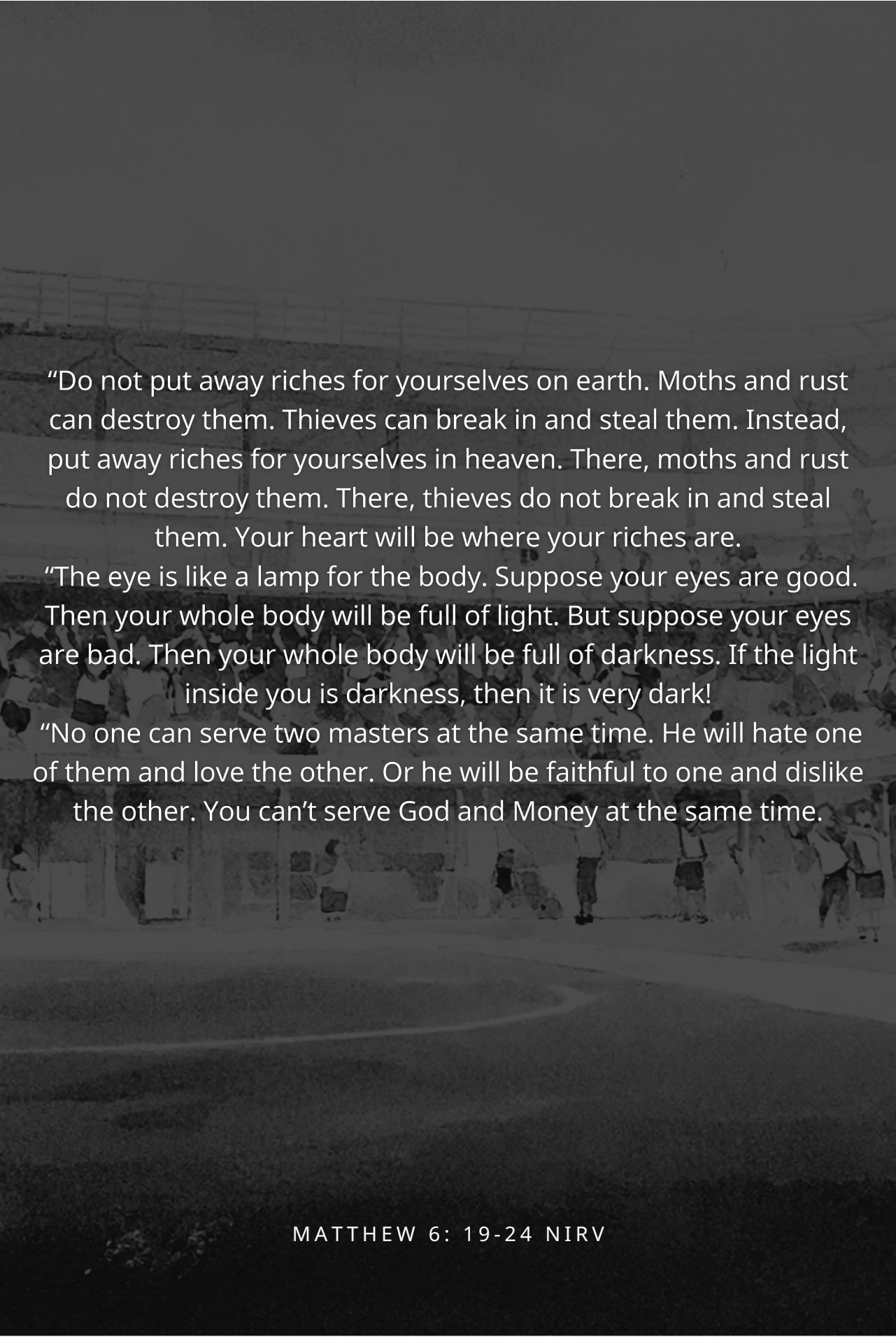
Read John 6:25-35. What was the crowd truly seeking from Jesus? What does Jesus offer that is different from physical bread?

DISCUSSION:

- What are some of the "false hungers" that promise satisfaction but ultimately leave us empty?
- How can we distinguish between true and false hungers?
- How does Jesus satisfy the deepest hungers of our hearts?
- Why is it sometimes hard to admit that we are spiritually hungry?

APPLICATION:

- Encourage group members to identify their own "hungers" and evaluate whether they are seeking to satisfy them in healthy ways. Challenge them to commit to spending time with Jesus each day, seeking His guidance in their decision-making.
- Closing Activity Options: **"Hunger to Fulfillment" Chart** - Create a chart with two columns: "My Hungers" and "Jesus Fulfills." Have participants list their longings and then brainstorm how Jesus meets those needs.
- Communion: Share communion as a symbol of Jesus being the bread of life that satisfies our deepest hungers.



"Do not put away riches for yourselves on earth. Moths and rust can destroy them. Thieves can break in and steal them. Instead, put away riches for yourselves in heaven. There, moths and rust do not destroy them. There, thieves do not break in and steal them. Your heart will be where your riches are.

"The eye is like a lamp for the body. Suppose your eyes are good. Then your whole body will be full of light. But suppose your eyes are bad. Then your whole body will be full of darkness. If the light inside you is darkness, then it is very dark!

"No one can serve two masters at the same time. He will hate one of them and love the other. Or he will be faithful to one and dislike the other. You can't serve God and Money at the same time.

MATTHEW 6: 19-24 NIRV

3. INFLUENCES ON YOUR SPIRITUALITY

PASSAGE:

Matthew 6:19-24

THEME:

Discerning the influences that shape your spiritual life and intentionally focusing on God.

KEY VERSE:

Proverbs 4:23 - "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."

INTRODUCTION:

Start by asking the group: "What captures your attention? Where do you spend most of your time and energy?". Discuss how our attention is often pulled in many directions by media, social pressures, and personal desires.

Relate Proverbs 4:23 to the fast-paced, media-saturated world we live in. Explain that guarding our hearts requires intentionality and discernment.

ENGAGE WITH SCRIPTURE

Read Matthew 6:19-24. What does it mean to store up treasures in heaven? How does our "eye" (our focus) affect our whole body?

DISCUSSION:

- What are some of the biggest distractions that keep you from focusing on God?
- How can you use the very distractions that seem bent on keeping you from spirituality as reminders of your deepest priorities?
- What are some practical steps you can take to "detox" your life from negative influences?
- How can we create "mezuzahs*" or reminders to keep God at the forefront of our minds ?

APPLICATION:

Encourage group members to evaluate their media consumption, social circles, and daily habits. Challenge them to make specific changes that will create more space for God in their lives.

- Closing Activity Options: **"Digital Sabbath"**
Pledge - Have participants commit to taking a break from social media or other digital distractions for a set period each week.
- Gratitude Journal: Encourage the keeping of a gratitude journal to identify the things that are life-giving and positive influences in your life.

- A **mezuzah** is a small decorative case that holds a tiny scroll of parchment with special Hebrew verses from the Torah written on it. It's placed on the doorposts of Jewish homes as a symbol of their faith and a reminder of God's presence.

Faith is being sure of what we hope for. It is being certain of what we do not see. That is what the people of long ago were praised for. We have faith. So we understand that everything was made when God commanded it. That's why we believe that what we see was not made out of what could be seen. Abel had faith. So he offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain did. Because of his faith Abel was praised as a godly man. God said good things about his offerings. Because of his faith Abel still speaks. He speaks even though he is dead. Enoch had faith. So he was taken from this life. He didn't die. He just couldn't be found. God had taken him away. Before God took him, Enoch was praised as one who pleased God. Without faith it isn't possible to please God. Those who come to God must believe that he exists. And they must believe that he rewards those who look to him. Noah had faith. So he built an ark to save his family. He built it because of his great respect for God. God had warned him about things that could not yet be seen. Because of his faith he showed the world that it was guilty. Because of his faith he was considered right with God. Abraham had faith. So he obeyed God. God called him to go to a place he would later receive as his own. So he went. He did it even though he didn't know where he was going. Because of his faith he made his home in the land God had promised him. He was like an outsider in a strange country. He lived there in tents. So did Isaac and Jacob. They received the same promise he did. Abraham was looking forward to the city that has foundations. He was waiting for the city that God planned and built. Abraham had faith. So God made it possible for him to become a father. He became a father even though he was too old. Sarah also was too old to have children. But Abraham believed that the One who made the promise was faithful. Abraham was past the time when he could have children. But many children came from that one man. They were as many as the stars in the sky. They were as many as the sand on the seashore. No one could count them.

HEBREWS 11:1-12 NIRV

4. WHAT IS FAITH AND HOW DO I GET IT?

PASSAGE:

Hebrews 11:1-12

THEME:

Understanding the true nature of faith and cultivating a dynamic relationship with God.

KEY VERSE:

Hebrews 11:1 - "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see."

INTRODUCTION:

Begin by asking: "What does 'faith' mean to you? Is it blind belief, or something more?". Acknowledge that many people have misconceptions about faith, viewing it as the opposite of reason or evidence.

Explain that Hebrews 11 is often called the "faith chapter" because it highlights the lives of many Old Testament heroes who demonstrated extraordinary faith.

ENGAGE WITH SCRIPTURE

Read Hebrews 11:1-12. What do these examples teach us about the nature of faith? What were some of the challenges these individuals faced, and how did they overcome them?

DISCUSSION:

- What are some signs of "bad faith," such as coercion, pressure, or a need for belonging?
- What are some characteristics of healthy faith, such as humility, teachability, and gratitude?
- How can we "upgrade" our faith to make it more relevant and meaningful in today's world?
- How does a community of faith play an important role in faith development?

APPLICATION:

- Encourage group members to examine their own motives for believing and to seek out mentors and role models who exemplify healthy faith.
- Closing Activity Options: **"Faith Upgrade" Plan** - Have participants identify one area of their faith that needs strengthening and create a specific plan for growth, incorporating prayer, Bible study, and service.
- Share a story: Have each participant share a story about a time where they had their faith tested.

"But here is what I tell you who hear me. Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who call down curses on you. And pray for those who treat you badly. "Suppose someone hits you on one cheek. Turn your other cheek to him also.

Suppose someone takes your coat. Don't stop him from taking your shirt. "Give to everyone who asks you. And if anyone takes what belongs to you, don't ask to get it back. Do to others as you want them to do to you. "Suppose you love those who love you. Should anyone praise you for that? Even 'sinners' love those who love them. And suppose you do good to those who are good to you. Should anyone praise you for that? Even 'sinners' do that. And suppose you lend money to those who can pay you back.

Should anyone praise you for that? Even a 'sinner' lends to 'sinners,' expecting them to pay everything back. "But love your enemies. Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then you will receive a lot in return. And you will be sons of the Most High God. He is kind to people who are evil and are not thankful. So have mercy, just as your Father has mercy.

5. HOW CAN I BE MORE COMPASSIONATE AND CENTERED

PASSAGE:

Luke 6:27-36

THEME:

Cultivating compassion and inner peace through spiritual disciplines and a heart connected to God.

KEY VERSE:

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

INTRODUCTION:

Start by asking: "In today's world, what does it mean to be compassionate and centered?". Acknowledge that life is full of challenges, pain, and difficult people that can easily disrupt our inner peace and diminish our compassion.

Relate Micah 6:8 to the teachings of Jesus, who exemplified compassion and challenged His followers to do the same (Matt 5:43-48).

ENGAGE WITH SCRIPTURE

Read Luke 6:27-36. What does it mean to "love your enemies" and "do good to those who hate you"? How can we practice these principles in our daily lives?

DISCUSSION:

- What are some specific tools or "spiritual disciplines" that can enlarge the heart, such as prayer, meditation, fasting, and service?
- How can we remove the "impediments" that block our hearts and minds from experiencing God's flow of life?
- How does forgiveness play a crucial role in cultivating compassion and inner peace?
- What role does community play in developing compassion?

APPLICATION:

- Challenge group members to choose one or two spiritual disciplines to incorporate into their daily routines.
- Closing Activity Options: **Compassion Challenge**: Have each member commit to doing a random act of kindness or service for someone in need during the week.
- Guided Meditation: Lead the group in a guided meditation focusing on compassion, forgiveness, and inner peace.

RESOURCES

"These resources are provided to support your continued exploration of spirituality, long after our time together concludes. As discipleship is an eternal journey, may this study guide be a milestone that encourages a continuous pursuit of God and a deeper understanding of His love, until we see Him as He is.

- Deep Calling by Tara VinCross
- Discovering God's Will by Troy Fitzgerald
- Do Justice, Love Mercy by Seth Pierce
- The Forgiveness Formula by Roberta Fish
- Social Justice and the Church by Calvin Rock
- The Journey Bible Study Series by Ron Pickell
- Relational Bible Study Series by Steve Case
- Called to Teach by Dr. Ted Hamilton
- The 3 Colors of Your Spirituality by Christian Schwarz
- Beginning Your Spiritual Journey by Dan Day
- Transforma tu Familia by Dr. Alfonso Valenzuela
- Not Alone in the Garden by Alvin Kibble
- Autumn Gold, Winter Grace by Ken McFarland
- A Deeper Look at Your Church by Dan Day

All books listed are on sale at AdventSource.com at the time of release.

BEST PRACTICES FOR FACILITATORS

To ensure youth and young adults feel safe, yearn to return, and participate openly, facilitators should focus on creating an environment characterized by trust, relevance, and spiritual depth. Here's a breakdown of key practices:

1. Create a Safe & Welcoming Environment

2. Ensure Relevance & Real-Life Connection

3. Foster Spiritual Growth & Reflection

4. Encourage Open Participation

5. Adaptability & Flexibility

6. Key Facilitation Skills

- a. Humble & Teachable: Be open to learning from participants.
- b. Authenticity: Share personal experiences to build trust.
- c. Relational: Foster meaningful relationships.
- d. Clear Communication: Ensure instructions are easily understood.
- e. Empowerment: Encourage ownership of the spiritual journey.
- f. Self-Awareness: Acknowledge and address personal biases.

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