

# **NEXT STEPS CLASS WORKBOOK**

**UPDATED 2026**

## **SUGGESTED MATERIALS**

- **BIBLE**
- **WORKBOOK**
- **JOURNAL AND PEN OR PENCIL**

## SESSION 1: *Rooted in God's Love*

### I. Welcome

As we begin this journey together, I want to remind us that this is not just a Bible study or a church class—***it's a practice of becoming***. Today, we begin by reflecting on what it means to be *rooted in God's love*. That's where our vision begins, and it's where all transformation flows from."

### II. Reflective Opening Exercise

|                                                                                   |                        |                                                |
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|  | <b>Journal Prompt:</b> | <i>What does it mean to be rooted in love?</i> |
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**Being rooted in love is** not just a poetic phrase—it's a spiritual posture. ***It's the foundation for everything: how we relate to God, to each other, and to the world***

### III. Teaching Segment

#### **Ephesians 3:16-19**

*<sup>16</sup> I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, <sup>17</sup> so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, **being rooted and established in love,** <sup>18</sup> 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, <sup>19</sup> and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*

#### 1. **God's love is the soil of our growth.**

- Paul's metaphor for being *rooted* implies stability, nourishment, and long-term flourishing.
- We don't start with belief, behavior, or knowledge—we begin with love.

#### 2. **The Church's Vision:**

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Our vision is to become a community **so rooted in God's love** that we are reshaping how Christianity is understood and practiced in our generation.

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This isn't just about programs or theology—it's about ***identity***

#### 3. **Core Values (briefly introduce):**

- **Communion** (with God): being present to Love.
- **Community** (with one another): love embodied in relationship.
- **Compassion** (for the world): love extended outward

|                                                                                     |                        |                                                                              |
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|  | <b>Journal Prompt:</b> | <i>Which one of these values speaks to your soul most clearly right now?</i> |
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#### IV. Questions



##### Journal Prompts:

1. How does being *rooted in love* impact your relationship with God and others?
2. Where in your life do you feel uprooted or disconnected from love?

#### V. Spiritual Practice Introduction

This week, we'll be practicing a simple breath prayer.

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When you **inhale**, *pray:*  
*'I am rooted and established...'*  
And as you **exhale**, *pray:*  
*'...in your love.'*

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#### VI. Final Reflection



##### Journal Prompt:

What does a life rooted and established in love look like for you?"

#### VII. Closing

You are not asked to earn God's love. You're invited to root yourself in it—to dwell, to grow, to become. That's where we start. And everything else flows from there.

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*May Christ dwell in your hearts  
through faith, that you, being  
rooted and grounded in love,  
may be filled with the fullness  
of God.*

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## SESSION 2: *His Story, Their Story, Our Story, My Story*

### I. Welcome

Theme: Learning to read the Bible in its proper context--literarily, communally, and personally.

### **Big Idea**

***Scripture is not God's \*literal\* word to \*all people at all times\**** - it is a sacred library of God's unfolding relationship with humanity, best read with reverence, curiosity, and context. Our goal is to move from a flat, overly personalized reading to a rich, layered engagement with the Bible that respects genre, audience, and the narrative arc.

### Opening Question

|                                                                                   |                        |                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <b>Journal Prompt:</b> | What has been your biggest challenge in understanding the Bible?" |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|

## II. Teaching the Four Stories

Frame the lenses with this ordering:

### ***1. His Story: The Grand Narrative***

Scripture tells one long story from creation to covenant, exile to return, cross to resurrection, Spirit to new creation.

- The Bible's main character is God, ***not us***.
- God is not static, and Scripture reflects humanity's evolving understanding of the Divine.

What shifts when we ask, "*What does this passage tell me about who God is and how the authors believe God has acted in history?*"

## **2. Their Story: The Original Audience**

Before the Bible speaks to us, it spoke to them -- real people in ancient Israel and first-century Judaism.

- This lens honors the historical, cultural, and literary context.
- We respect the Bible by asking: who wrote this, when, why, and what did it mean to them and their audience?
- Genre matters: law is not poetry is not parable is not prophecy.

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*We've often been taught to skip straight to 'my story,' but that shortcut can flatten or distort the Bible's power*

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## **3. Our Story: The Church and the World**

We are part of the story now. The church carries the torch of justice, compassion, and reconciliation.

- How does this passage guide our shared life?
- This includes the Church, the local community, and even all of humanity.
- What do you think it means for the church today?

## **4. My Story: Personal Application**

Finally, we ask, what does this mean for me?

- We come last to this question--with humility.
- Scripture now flows into our lives, not as a weapon or mirror of preference, but a light.
- How might your own story change if you read Scripture in this order more often?

### III. Practice Activity: Micah 6:8 through the Four Lenses

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

| Lens        | Exploration Question                                                                          |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| His Story   | Where does this verse fit in the grand story of God's covenantal love and pursuit of justice? |
| Their Story | What was happening in Israel when Micah wrote this? What was the prophet confronting?         |
| Our Story   | How might this verse guide the church today in a divided and hurting world?                   |
| My Story    | What is God inviting me to notice, do, or become through this verse?                          |

Historical Hint:

- Micah prophesied during Israel's corruption and religious hypocrisy.
- God wasn't asking for rituals, but integrity, compassion, and humility

#### 4. Reflection & Practice Challenge (5 minutes)

"What if the most sacred way to read Scripture is to let it speak first to them, then to us-- before we ever ask what it means for me?"

Challenge:

- This week, pick one short passage a day (e.g., a Psalm or parable).

Ask:

- 1. What does this reveal about God?
- 2. What did this mean to them (ancient Israel or early church)?
- 3. How does this speak to our community/world?
- 4. What does this awaken in me?

## Session 3: Being True to Christ

### I. Welcome & Centering

Breath Prayer: “Abba, I belong to You.” \* (Romans 8:15)

### II. Teaching Segment

Being true to Christ isn’t about rule-keeping or identity performance, it’s about real trust and growing intimacy.

1. Trust Jesus authentically and continually as Savior.

- Trust is not just a one-time belief, but daily surrender.
- John 3:16 (NIV) “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son...”

2. Pursue deep friendship with Christ

- We express our friendship with Christ through practical obedience.
- “You are my friends if you do what I command.” (John 15:14)

3. Live courageously under Christ’s lordship

- Living under the lordship of Jesus includes allowing faith to shape actions.
- Luke 6:46 (NIV) — “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?”

### III. Journal or Discussion



#### **Journal Prompt:**

1. What does trusting Jesus look like in your daily life?
2. What’s one way friendship with Christ could be expressed in obedience?
3. Where are you resisting His lordship-out of fear, doubt, or habit?

## Guided Prayer Practice

Use the Lord's Prayer as a guide:

- "Our Father in heaven" — rest in God's care
- "Hallowed be they name" - rest in God's holiness
- "Your kingdom come" — invite Christ's leadership.
- "Your will be done" - Surrender your will
- "On earth as it is in heaven" - Pray for God's light to break into the in dark places
- "Give us daily bread" — acknowledge your needs.
- "Forgive us as we forgive others" — release guilt and forgive others.
- "Lead us not into temptation but deliver us..." — ask for strength.
- "For yours is the kingdom, the power and glory forever – Praise Him
- Pause between lines.

## IV. Introducing the Rhythm of Life

A Rhythm of Life is not about rules—it's about making space for what matters most.

Think of it as a spiritual structure that helps you stay connected to Christ.

Consider:

Daily (e.g. prayer, scripture, silence)

Weekly (e.g. Sabbath, meals with others)

Monthly (e.g. solitude, generosity, serving)

## V. Reflection Activity

|                                                                                     |                        |                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <b>Journal Prompt:</b> | What is one small way I can deepen my connection to Christ this week? |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|

## VI. Closing

Being true to Christ is not about striving—it's about staying. We remain in Him and He produces fruit in us.

May you trust Him as Savior, walk with Him as Friend, and live boldly under His Lordship this week.

## Session 4: Being Kind to All People



## I. Welcome

*Today, we're leaning into something that sounds simple—but is spiritually powerful: kindness.*

- Not just being polite, or well-mannered, or nice—but practicing a kind of radical grace that reflects God's heart.
- In a world where people are often divided, reactive, or indifferent, Jesus invites us to be a different kind of community—one shaped by compassion, humility, and love."

## II. Scripture Reading

### Micah 6:8

<sup>8</sup> 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.

### Matthew 22:37-39

<sup>37</sup> Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' <sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'



#### Journal Prompt:

As you hear those words, is there a phrase or idea that stands out to you today?

## III. Teaching Segment

Becoming a people of kindness is not just in isolated acts, but as a posture of the heart.

### 1. Extending Grace: Seeing Others as God Sees Them

- Grace means seeing people not through judgment or fear, but as image-bearers.
- It begins with how we see.

#### Ephesians 4:32

<sup>32</sup> Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, ***just as*** in Christ, God forgave you.

### 2. Refusing Judgment: Practicing Humility and Understanding

- We often jump to conclusions or assumptions.
- Jesus calls us to humility—to remove the log from our own eye first

### **Matthew 7:1-2**

7 “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. <sup>2</sup> For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

### **James 1: 19 - 20**

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, <sup>20</sup>because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.

## **3.Serving Joyfully: Using Our Gifts to Bless Others**

Kindness becomes real **when we serve**—when we go beyond good intentions and actually bless someone.

### **Peter 4:10**

<sup>10</sup> Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.

## **IV. Journal or Discussion**

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|--|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <b>Journal Prompt:</b> | 1. When has someone shown you profound kindness?<br>2. Why did it matter?<br>3.'What would it take for our community to become known for kindness? |
|--|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## **V. Practice: Brainstorming Kindness**

|  |                        |                                                                                                                             |
|--|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <b>Journal Prompt:</b> | 1. What is ONE way you can practice kindness this week<br>2. At home?<br>3. At work?<br>4. At Church?<br>5. With strangers? |
|--|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## I. Welcome

- What does it mean to **be** the Body of Christ—not just in theory, but in the places where we live, work, and serve.
- God’s mission isn’t something far away; it starts right where we are and ripples forward.

## II. Scripture Reading & Reflection

### Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my **witnesses** in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

### 2 Corinthians 5:18–19

<sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: <sup>19</sup> that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, **not counting people’s sins against them**. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

## III. Teaching

### 1. Understanding the Four Spheres of Mission

- Jerusalem = our closest relationships and neighborhoods
- Judea = our wider community
- Samaria = people who are different from us, or those we might usually avoid
- Ends of the earth = global mission

2. Practicing the Incarnation of the Kingdom: Justice, Mercy, and Shalom  
“Being the Body of Christ means we **embody** the Kingdom wherever we are.

That looks like:

- Justice: standing for what is right (Micah 6:8)
- Mercy: showing compassion (Matthew 5:7)
- Shalom: working for wholeness and peace (Romans 12:18)

## IV. Interactive Activity: Mapping Your Spheres



### Journal Prompt:

Draw four circles or quadrants

- Jerusalem (closest relationships)
- Judea (community concerns)
- Samaria (those different from you)
- Ends of the earth (global mission)

## V. Practice: Planning Compassionate Action



### **Journal Prompt:**

1. Look at your map and choose one sphere where you feel called to take a step this week?
2. What is one intentional act of compassion you can practice there?"  
Write it down. (Keep it simple and doable)

## VI. Closing (2–3 minutes)

Mission isn't something we wait for—it's something we live. You are the Body of Christ, sent to your Jerusalem, your Judea, your Samaria, and the ends of the earth.

## Session 6: Creating and Living a Rule of Life

### I. Welcome

- Today we come to the final session in this journey—but really, it's the beginning of a deeper, intentional walk with Christ.
- We've talked about being rooted in love, being true to Christ, kind to others, and living on mission. Today, we ask: *How do I live this out in a sustainable way?*

### II. Scripture Reading & Reflection

#### John 15:5–8 (NIV)

*'I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing...'*

- Jesus doesn't say, 'Try harder.' He says, 'Remain in me.'
- That's the heart of a Rule of Life—not pressure, but *presence*.
- Not striving but *staying connected*."

### III. Teaching Segment

#### 1. The Importance of Intentionality in Spiritual Growth

- ***We don't drift toward spiritual maturity—we drift toward distraction.***
- Growth takes intention.
- A Rule of Life is like a trellis—it supports your spiritual growth so your life can bear fruit.
- It's not a checklist. It's a *rhythm* of life that makes space for communion with God."
- A good Rule of Life isn't complicated—it's personal, sustainable, and grace-filled.

#### 2. How a Rule of Life Reflects Our Core Values

- **Communion:** How are you nurturing your connection with Christ? (prayer, silence, scripture)
- **Community:** How are you staying present and vulnerable with others? (meals, small groups, service)
- **Compassion:** How are you expressing love to the world? (generosity, justice, kindness)

### IV. Interactive Activity: Refine Your Rule

Let's work together to refine your Rule of Life. Break into groups of 2–3. Share what you've been working on—daily, weekly, and monthly practices—and ask each other:

- Does this feel sustainable?
- Does it reflect your season of life?
- Does it help you live out communion, community, and compassion?
- Encourage each other. You're not grading. You're helping each other discern.

## **V. Practice: Sharing for Accountability**

- Spiritual practices grow best in community. One way to strengthen your Rule of Life is to share it—with a trusted friend, mentor, or your small group.
- Let someone else hold your rhythm with you—not as a judge, but as a companion.

## **VI. Closing Reflection & Prayer (5 minutes)**

You don't have to be perfect to be faithful. You don't need to do everything—just begin with what draws you to Christ.

Let's close by praying for strength, wisdom, and grace as we live our rhythms.

### **Prayer:**

*God of rhythm and rest, help us abide in You. Guide our steps. Root us in Your love. And let our lives become a quiet witness to Your goodness. Amen*