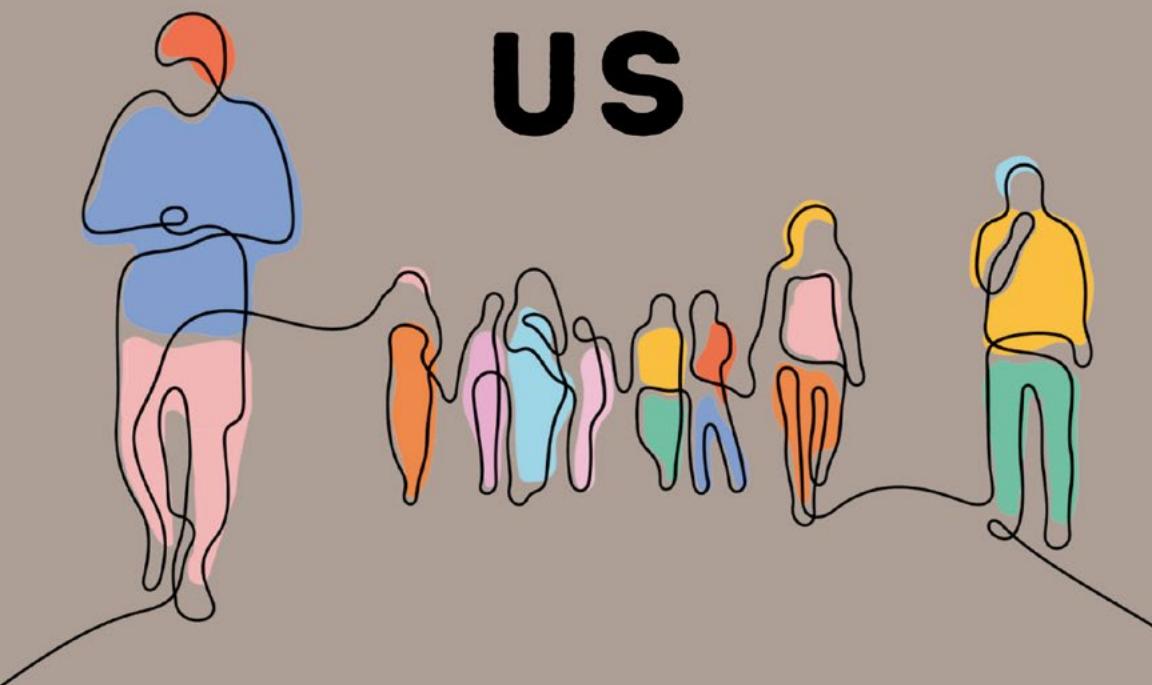


THE SPACE BETWEEN US



THE SPACE BETWEEN US

The space between us is real. But it doesn't have to stay that way. Through the love and example of Jesus, we can turn relational gaps into sacred ground—choosing grace over distance and presence over avoidance.

Every relationship experiences gaps—between what's said and what's heard, what's needed and what's given. Jesus invites us to close those gaps with humility, truth, and patience, creating spaces where honesty and grace can coexist. Whether in family, friendship, or community, Jesus shows us how to bridge the distance with love that restores, relationships that heal, and connection that reflects God's heart.

Join us as we explore how the love and example of Jesus can transform the space between us. Together, we'll learn how to close relational gaps, choose grace over distance, and create sacred ground where connection and healing can grow.

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book was created as a companion guide to the Sunday teaching series, *The Space Between Us*. In it, you will find passages of scripture that pertain to the week's Sunday message, as well as spiritual practices that promote relationship building between you and God, and between you and your community circle.

If you miss a Sunday gathering, you can listen to the message on your favorite podcast platform, via YouTube, or directly from our website.

The content in this book is designed as a tool to aid you in the process of reflecting on the weekly Sunday message and giving it time to settle deeper. We do this by slowing down to study scripture, and stepping into practices of spiritual formation that lead to outward action.

All passages of scripture found in this book are in the New Living Translations (NLT), unless noted.

WHAT TO EXPECT

DAY 1

Gain context by reading a short overview of the week's teaching.

DAY 2

Explore the week's primary scripture passage, using prompts to guide your study and reflection.

DAY 3

Engage with a supporting scripture passage, looking at how to close the gaps and make space for one another through Jesus' example.

DAY 4

Practice listening prayer, slowing your pace to hear God's voice and receive what He wants to give.

GROUP PRAYER JOURNAL

Pray for one another, and use these pages to record prayer requests and God's answers along the way.

THERE'S ALWAYS A GAP

Every relationship experiences gaps—between what's said and what's heard, what's needed and what's given. Jesus invites us to close those gaps with humility, truth, and patience.

THE SPACE BETWEEN US

Message Notes

Week 1: There's Always a Gap

DAY 1 | OVERVIEW

Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry.

JAMES 1:19

Every relationship has gaps—between what's said and what's heard, what's needed and what's given. These gaps can easily be filled in with misunderstanding, frustration, or silence, but Jesus invites us to close them with humility, truth, and patience. Scripture reminds us to be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger, because listening is what helps begin the process of closing the gap. This isn't passive listening, but one that offers active presence, and values the other person's experience over our need to fix or defend.

Speaking truthfully matters, but when spoken without love, it only widens the gap. Patience, on the other hand, protects connection. Anger builds walls, but patience keeps the door open and preserves relationships. This week we'll explore what it looks like to listen well, speak truth with compassion, and choose patience that preserves love.

For those following Jesus:

Where might God be inviting you to slow down, listen, and respond with patience instead of anger?

For those exploring faith:

What might it reveal about God if He is patient and slow to anger with you?

DAY 2 | READ SCRIPTURE: PRIMARY PASSAGE

Read the passage slowly, noticing any words or phrases that stand out. Pause where you feel drawn to linger. Allow space for God to speak through His Word.

JAMES 1:19-27

¹⁹ Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. ²⁰ Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires. ²¹ So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls.

²² But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. ²³ For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. ²⁴ You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. ²⁵ But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.

²⁶ If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless. ²⁷ Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you.

FROM READING TO REFLECTION // LEAN IN

Every relationship experiences gaps. Jesus invites us to close them with humility, truth, and patience.

- What stands out to you from these passages about listening, truth-telling, or slowing down your reactions?

- Where do you most often feel a “gap” between what you say and what others hear, or between what you need and what gets expressed?

- When a gap forms in a relationship, what is your typical response? Is it defensiveness, withdrawal, frustration, silence, or something else?

- What do you most desire in your relationships when misunderstandings happen? Is it connection, clarity, patience, safety, or something else?

DAY 3 | READ SCRIPTURE: SUPPORTING PASSAGE

JOHN 4:4-26

⁴ He had to go through Samaria on the way. ⁵ Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime. ⁷ Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink." ⁸ He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food.

⁹ The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?"

¹⁰ Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water."

¹¹ "But sir, you don't have a rope or a bucket," she said, "and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water? ¹² And besides, do you think you're greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?"

¹³ Jesus replied, "Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. ¹⁴ But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life."

¹⁵ "Please, sir," the woman said, "give me this water! Then I'll never be thirsty again, and I won't have to come here to get water."

¹⁶ “Go and get your husband,” Jesus told her. ¹⁷ “I don’t have a husband,” the woman replied.

Jesus said, “You’re right! You don’t have a husband— ¹⁸ for you have had five husbands, and you aren’t even married to the man you’re living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!”

¹⁹ “Sir,” the woman said, “you must be a prophet. ²⁰ So tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim, where our ancestors worshiped?”

²¹ Jesus replied, “Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews. ²³ But the time is coming—indeed it’s here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. ²⁴ For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.”

²⁵ The woman said, “I know the Messiah is coming—the one who is called Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

²⁶ Then Jesus told her, “I am the Messiah!”

EXAMINE & ENTRUST // JOURNALING PRAYER

Jesus closes the gap by slowing down, listening deeply, and seeing the person beneath the surface. Where might Jesus be inviting you to listen more fully before reacting or assuming?

Ask Jesus to give you a quiet, attentive heart – one that listens with patience, empathy, and humility.

DAY 4 | LISTEN & RECEIVE

Take a moment to quiet your heart.

What does He see? What does He want you to know?

It's a powerful step into inner healing and Spirit-led transformation.

**Adapted from a listening prayer practice originally shared by novo.org.*

GROUP PRAYER PAGE

Pray for one another. Use this page to record prayer requests, praises, and God's answers along the way.

BRAVE SPACES

THE SPACE BETWEEN US

Safe relationships aren't built on silence—they're built on love that makes room for truth. Jesus shows us how to create spaces where honesty and grace can coexist.

Message Notes

DAY 1 | OVERVIEW

*May God, who gives this patience and encouragement,
help you live in complete harmony with each other,
as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus.*

ROMANS 15:5

Safe relationships aren't built on silence—they're built on love that makes room for truth. In a world that is often quick to judge and slow to listen, Jesus calls us to create brave spaces where honesty and grace can coexist. Scripture reminds us to accept one another just as Christ has accepted us, to stop condemning, and instead to build each other up.

We make brave spaces possible when we set judgment aside, and step forward with courage. Bravery isn't the absence of fear, but choosing to stay present, patient, and kind even when honesty feels uncomfortable. Jesus modeled this perfectly, calling people into the light of truth while remaining with them in their mess.

For those following Jesus:

*Where might God be inviting you to speak truth
with gentleness and grace this week?*

For those exploring faith:

*What would it mean to believe that Jesus welcomes you fully,
even while helping you grow?*

DAY 2 | READ SCRIPTURE: PRIMARY PASSAGE

Read the passage slowly, noticing any words or phrases that stand out. Pause where you feel drawn to linger. Allow space for God to speak through His Word.

ROMANS 14:10-13

¹⁰ So why do you condemn another believer? Why do you look down on another believer? Remember, we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹ For the Scriptures say,

“As surely as I live,’ says the Lord,
‘every knee will bend to me,
and every tongue will declare allegiance to God.”

¹² Yes, each of us will give a personal account to God. ¹³ So let’s stop condemning each other. Decide instead to live in such a way that you will not cause another believer to stumble and fall.

ROMANS 15:1-7

¹ We who are strong must be considerate of those who are sensitive about things like this. We must not just please ourselves.

² We should help others do what is right and build them up in the Lord. ³ For even Christ didn’t live to please himself. As the Scriptures say, “The insults of those who insult you, O God, have fallen on me.” ⁴ Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God’s promises to be fulfilled.

⁵ May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus. ⁶ Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁷ Therefore, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:11

¹¹ So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.

FROM READING TO REFLECTION // LEAN IN

Safe relationships aren't built on silence—they're built on love that makes room for truth and grace.

- What do these passages reveal about the kind of community Jesus calls us to build, one marked by encouragement, acceptance, and unity?

- When someone in your life needs honesty from you, what emotions tend to rise first? It could be fear, avoidance, anxiety, courage, compassion, etc.

- Whose presence makes you feel safe enough to be honest, and what does that reveal about the kind of spaces you want to create?

- Brave spaces make room for honesty, gentleness, belonging, accountability, mutual trust, etc. What do you most want people to experience when they're with you?

DAY 3 | READ SCRIPTURE: SUPPORTING PASSAGE

LUKE 19:1-10

¹ Jesus entered Jericho and made his way through the town. ² There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in the region, and he had become very rich. ³ He tried to get a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road, for Jesus was going to pass that way.

⁵ When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. “Zacchaeus!” he said. “Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today.”

⁶ Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy. ⁷ But the people were displeased. “He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner,” they grumbled.

⁸ Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, “I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!”

⁹ Jesus responded, “Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.”

EXAMINE & TRUST // JOURNALING PRAYER

Jesus creates brave spaces by offering belonging before change, inviting Zacchaeus close before speaking truth. Where is Jesus inviting you to extend belonging or compassion to someone before addressing what needs to change?

Ask Jesus to help you welcome others with the same grace and openness that made Zacchaeus feel safe enough to come down from the tree.

DAY 4 | LISTEN & RECEIVE

Take a moment to quiet your heart.

What does He see? What does He want you to know?

It's a powerful step into inner healing and Spirit-led transformation.

**Adapted from a listening prayer practice originally shared by novo.org.*

GROUP PRAYER PAGE

Pray for one another. Use this page to record prayer requests, praises, and God's answers along the way.

LOVE THAT LASTS

THE SPACE BETWEEN US

Marriage isn't about winning or control—it's about mutual surrender in the way of Jesus. When both spouses choose humility, honor, and sacrificial love, the space between becomes sacred ground.

Message Notes

DAY 1 | OVERVIEW

And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

EPHESIANS 5:21

In this passage, Paul declares something radical: through faith in In Ephesians 5, Paul calls husbands and wives to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ, reminding us that love and respect are not competing commands but shared practices.

But mutual submission isn't limited to marriage, but a kingdom posture for every follower of Jesus. It is not weakness, but strength shaped by love. Whether in friendships, family relationships, dating, or marriage, we are invited to embody the daily choice to serve, to listen, and to elevate the other.

Christlike love never dominates, rather it lays itself down so connection and healing can grow. Wherever we find ourselves—married, single, or somewhere in between—this passage calls us into the same self-giving love that restores and unites.

For those following Jesus:

How might practicing humility strengthen your closest relationships this week?

For those exploring faith:

What would it mean to believe that God's love for you is not controlling, but self-giving and kind?

DAY 2 | READ SCRIPTURE: PRIMARY PASSAGE

Read the passage slowly, noticing any words or phrases that stand out. Pause where you feel drawn to linger. Allow space for God to speak through His Word.

EPHESIANS 5:15-31

¹⁵ So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. ¹⁶ Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. ¹⁷ Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. ¹⁸ Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, ¹⁹ singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. ²⁰ And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

²¹ And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

²² For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord.

²³ For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. ²⁴ As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything.

²⁵ For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her ²⁶ to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word. ²⁷ He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. ²⁸ In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. ²⁹ No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church. ³⁰ And we are members of his body.

³¹ As the Scriptures say, "A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. ³² This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. ³³ So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

FROM READING TO REFLECTION // LEAN IN

Healthy relationships of all kinds grow through mutual surrender, humility, and self-giving love.

- What strikes you about Paul's vision of mutual submission and Christlike love in this passage?

- When conflict or tension rises in a relationship, what part of you resists surrender, service, or mutual submission?

- Who in your life has shown you Christlike humility, and how did their posture impact your relationship with them?

- What do you most want the people close to you to feel in your presence?

DAY 3 | READ SCRIPTURE: SUPPORTING PASSAGE

JOHN 13:1-17

¹ Before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew that his hour had come to leave this world and return to his Father. He had loved his disciples during his ministry on earth, and now he loved them to the very end. ² It was time for supper, and the devil had already prompted Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. ³ Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. ⁴ So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist,⁵ and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him.

⁶ When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

⁷ Jesus replied, "You don't understand now what I am doing, but someday you will."

⁸ "No," Peter protested, "you will never ever wash my feet!"

Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you won't belong to me."

⁹ Simon Peter exclaimed, "Then wash my hands and head as well, Lord, not just my feet!"

¹⁰ Jesus replied, "A person who has bathed all over does not need to wash, except for the feet, to be entirely clean. And you disciples are clean, but not all of you." ¹¹ For Jesus knew who would betray him. That is what he meant when he said, "Not all of you are clean."

¹² After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, "Do you understand what I was doing?¹³ You call me

'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you are right, because that's what I am. ¹⁴ And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. ¹⁵ I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you. ¹⁶ I tell you the truth, slaves are not greater than their master. Nor is the messenger more important than the one who sends the message. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them.

EXAMINE & ENTRUST // JOURNALING PRAYER

Jesus shows that lasting love is expressed not through power or control, but through serving others in a posture of humility, honor, and sacrificial love. Where is Jesus inviting you to practice self-giving love in a way that honors and uplifts someone else?

Ask Jesus to form a servant-hearted posture in you—one that reflects His humility and His love.

DAY 4 | LISTEN & RECEIVE

Take a moment to quiet your heart.

What does He see? What does He want you to know?

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GROUP PRAYER PAGE

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RAISING THE NEXT GENERATION

Parenting is about more than behavior—it's about forming identity. When we lead with grace and truth, we reflect God's heart to our kids.

THE SPACE BETWEEN US

Message Notes

DAY 1 | OVERVIEW

Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it.

PROVERBS 22:6

God's heart for parents is not perfection but presence. When we lead with both grace and truth, we mirror God's steady, patient, and kind character to the children entrusted to us. Scripture calls parents to direct their children toward the right path and to raise them with the love and instruction that comes from the Lord.

But this invitation isn't only for parents. All of us, in one way or another, influence the next generation through mentoring, serving, teaching, caring for nieces, nephews, grandchildren, or simply showing up for the kids in our church and community. Whether we are raising children or helping shape the lives of younger people around us, we're called to foster safety, invite honest dialogue, and model a faith that is lived with humility and love.

We can let fear and pressure push us toward control, but God calls us to respond with faith, trusting that He is more invested in our children's growth than we are. As we parent, or influence the next generation in any role, we're invited to reflect the Father's love, guiding with courage, correcting with gentleness, and resting in His grace.

For those following Jesus:

Where might God be inviting you to parent (or lead) from peace instead of pressure this week?

For those exploring faith:

What could it mean to see God not as a distant authority, but as a loving Father who guides with grace?

DAY 2 | READ SCRIPTURE: PRIMARY PASSAGE

Read the passage slowly, noticing any words or phrases that stand out. Pause where you feel drawn to linger. Allow space for God to speak through His Word.

PROVERBS 22:6

Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it.

EPHESIANS 6:4

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.

COLOSSIANS 3:21

Fathers, do not aggravate your children, or they will become discouraged.

1 THESSALONIANS 2:7-12

⁷ As apostles of Christ we certainly had a right to make some demands of you, but instead we were like children among you. Or we were like a mother feeding and caring for her own children. ⁸ We loved you so much that we shared with you not only God's Good News but our own lives, too.

⁹ Don't you remember, dear brothers and sisters, how hard we worked among you? Night and day we toiled to earn a living so that we would not be a burden to any of you as we preached God's Good News to you. ¹⁰ You yourselves are our witnesses—and so is God—that we were devout and honest and faultless toward all of you believers. ¹¹ And you know that we treated each of you as a father treats his own

children. ¹² We pleaded with you, encouraged you, and urged you to live your lives in a way that God would consider worthy. For he called you to share in his Kingdom and glory.

FROM READING TO REFLECTION // LEAN IN

Shaping the next generation is about forming identity, not just managing behavior.

- What do this week's passages reveal about God's heart for forming identity rather than simply managing behavior?

- Think of a young person in your life. What emotions rise when you think about their future—fear, hope, pressure, responsibility?

- In what ways do you tend to react out of anxiety or control rather than presence, guidance, or blessing?

- When you imagine influencing the next generation well, what do you hope to model?

DAY 3 | READ SCRIPTURE: SUPPORTING PASSAGE

MARK 10:13-16

¹³ One day some parents brought their children to Jesus so he could touch and bless them. But the disciples scolded the parents for bothering him.

¹⁴ When Jesus saw what was happening, he was angry with his disciples. He said to them, “Let the children come to me. Don’t stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. ¹⁵ I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn’t receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.” ¹⁶ Then he took the children in his arms and placed his hands on their heads and blessed them.

EXAMINE & ENTRUST // JOURNALING PRAYER

Jesus doesn't correct or control the children, instead He welcomes them, blesses them, and calls them beloved. Who in the next generation, or in your sphere of influence, needs encouragement, blessing, or belonging from you?

Ask Jesus to show you how to reflect His delight, gentleness, and presence to the young people around you.

DAY 4 | LISTEN & RECEIVE

Take a moment to quiet your heart.

What does He see? What does He want you to know?

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GROUP PRAYER PAGE

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REPAIRING THE DAMAGE

Relational hurt is inevitable—but healing is optional. Jesus leads us to forgiveness not to minimize pain, but to make restoration possible.

THE SPACE BETWEEN US

Message Notes

DAY 1 | OVERVIEW

Be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

EPHESIANS 4:32

Relational hurt is inevitable—but healing is optional. Jesus leads us to forgiveness not to minimize pain, but to make restoration possible. We are called to make allowance for each other's faults and to forgive one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven us. Forgiveness is not about pretending the hurt didn't happen, but about refusing to let it define what happens next.

Unrepaired hurt leads to permanent distance, but grace offers a way to reduce the gap. Forgiveness isn't something we offer because others deserve it, but because we've been forgiven. When we release the power of an offense, we make room for healing to begin. It's the holy work of choosing freedom over resentment and grace over bitterness. We do this one small, courageous step at a time.

For those following Jesus:

Where might God be inviting you to take a step toward forgiveness, even if healing still feels far away?

For those exploring faith:

What would it mean to believe that God's forgiveness is freely offered to you, not because you've earned it, but because He loves you?

DAY 2 | READ SCRIPTURE: PRIMARY PASSAGE

Read the passage slowly, noticing any words or phrases that stand out. Pause where you feel drawn to linger. Allow space for God to speak through His Word.

COLOSSIANS 3:1-15

¹ Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. ² Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. ³ For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory.

⁵ So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. ⁶ Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming. ⁷ You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world. ⁸ But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. ⁹ Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. ¹⁰ Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. ¹¹ In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us.

¹² Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. ¹³ Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. ¹⁴ Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.

EPHESIANS 4:30-32

³⁰ And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. ³² Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

FROM READING TO REFLECTION // LEAN IN

Relational hurt is inevitable, but healing is optional. Forgiveness opens the door to restoration.

- What phrase or command from these passages about forgiveness and compassion stands out to you most, and why?

- Where do you feel lingering hurt, disappointment, or resentment that has quietly widened a relational gap?

- What beliefs or fears make forgiveness difficult for you—fear of being hurt again, feeling unheard, wanting justice?

- When you picture relational healing, what do you long for? Is it freedom, peace, closure, reconnection, or simply less pain?

DAY 3 | READ SCRIPTURE: SUPPORTING PASSAGE

JOHN 21:4-19

⁴ At dawn Jesus was standing on the beach, but the disciples couldn't see who he was. ⁵ He called out, "Fellows, have you caught any fish?"

"No," they replied.

⁶ Then he said, "Throw out your net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you'll get some!" So they did, and they couldn't haul in the net because there were so many fish in it.

⁷ Then the disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, "It's the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his tunic (for he had stripped for work), jumped into the water, and headed to shore. ⁸ The others stayed with the boat and pulled the loaded net to the shore, for they were only about a hundred yards from shore. ⁹ When they got there, they found breakfast waiting for them—fish cooking over a charcoal fire, and some bread.

¹⁰ "Bring some of the fish you've just caught," Jesus said. ¹¹ So Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net to the shore. There were 153 large fish, and yet the net hadn't torn.

¹² "Now come and have some breakfast!" Jesus said. None of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. ¹³ Then Jesus served them the bread and the fish. ¹⁴ This was the third time Jesus had appeared to his disciples since he had been raised from the dead.

¹⁵ After breakfast Jesus asked Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?"

"Yes, Lord," Peter replied, "you know I love you."

"Then feed my lambs," Jesus told him.

¹⁶ Jesus repeated the question: "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

"Yes, Lord," Peter said, "you know I love you."

"Then take care of my sheep," Jesus said.

¹⁷ A third time he asked him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was hurt that Jesus asked the question a third time. He said, "Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Then feed my sheep."

¹⁸ "I tell you the truth, when you were young, you were able to do as you liked; you dressed yourself and went wherever you wanted to go. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and others will dress you and take you where you don't want to go."

¹⁹ Jesus said this to let him know by what kind of death he would glorify God. Then Jesus told him, "Follow me."

EXAMINE & ENTRUST // JOURNALING PRAYER

Jesus repairs what is broken by naming the wound, offering grace, and restoring relationship. Where might Jesus be inviting you to move toward forgiveness, either offering it or receiving it?

Ask Jesus to soften your heart, heal what hurts, and lead you toward the kind of forgiveness that frees.

DAY 4 | LISTEN & RECEIVE

Take a moment to quiet your heart.

What does He see? What does He want you to know?

It's a powerful step into inner healing and Spirit-led transformation.

**Adapted from a listening prayer practice originally shared by novo.org.*

GROUP PRAYER PAGE

Pray for one another. Use this page to record prayer requests, praises, and God's answers along the way.

WHOLE AGAIN

Reconciliation is the heart of the gospel—and the hope for our relationships. Through Jesus, restoration is always possible, even when it's hard.

THE SPACE BETWEEN US

Message Notes

DAY 1 | OVERVIEW

And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:18

Reconciliation is the heart of the gospel—and the hope for our relationships. The same God who brought us back to Himself through Christ now calls us to be reconcilers in our own lives. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. This is what grace looks like in motion: God closing the gap we could never bridge on our own.

Unity doesn't happen automatically, but it takes intention, humility, and effort. Scripture calls us to make every effort to keep ourselves united in the Spirit. Reconciliation isn't about perfect agreement; it's about choosing peace even in difference, grace even when it's costly. When we live this way, we embody the gospel by becoming people who don't just make peace, but bring it.

For those following Jesus:

Where might God be inviting you to take a step toward reconciliation with someone, or within yourself?

For those exploring faith:

What if God's heart toward you has never been about condemnation, but reconciliation?

DAY 2 | READ SCRIPTURE: PRIMARY PASSAGE

Read the passage slowly, noticing any words or phrases that stand out. Pause where you feel drawn to linger. Allow space for God to speak through His Word.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-21

¹⁴ Either way, Christ's love controls us. Since we believe that Christ died for all, we also believe that we have all died to our old life. ¹⁵ He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them.

¹⁶ So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now! ¹⁷ This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

¹⁸ And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. ¹⁹ For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. ²⁰ So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" ²¹ For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

EPHESIANS 4:1-6

¹ Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God.

² Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love.

³ Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. ⁴ For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future.

⁵ There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all.

FROM READING TO REFLECTION // LEAN IN

Reconciliation is the heart of the gospel, and the hope for our relationships.

- How do these passages shape your understanding of reconciliation as part of the gospel and part of your calling?

- Where in your life do you sense division, distance, or disconnection that needs the reconciling love of Jesus?

- What keeps you from pursuing unity? Is it fear, pride, exhaustion, or something else?

- If reconciliation were possible, what would you hope it might lead to—peace, understanding, or simply less tension?

DAY 3 | READ SCRIPTURE: SUPPORTING PASSAGE

JOHN 17:17-26

¹⁷ Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth. ¹⁸ Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world. ¹⁹ And I give myself as a holy sacrifice for them so they can be made holy by your truth.

²⁰ “I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. ²¹ I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.

²² “I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. ²³ I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me. ²⁴ Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am. Then they can see all the glory you gave me because you loved me even before the world began!

²⁵ “O righteous Father, the world doesn’t know you, but I do; and these disciples know you sent me. ²⁶ I have revealed you to them, and I will continue to do so. Then your love for me will be in them, and I will be in them.”

EXAMINE & TRUST // JOURNALING PRAYER

Jesus prays that His followers would be one, showing the world what God's reconciling love looks like in real relationships. Where is Jesus inviting you to pursue unity, not agreement, but oneness marked by grace, peace, and humility?

Ask Jesus to make you a person who brings peace where there is division, and unity where there is distance. Invite Him to help you reflect His reconciling love in your relationships.

DAY 4 | LISTEN & RECEIVE

Take a moment to quiet your heart.

What does He see? What does He want you to know?

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**Adapted from a listening prayer practice originally shared by novo.org.*

GROUP PRAYER PAGE

Pray for one another. Use this page to record prayer requests, praises, and God's answers along the way.

A WEEK OF REFLECTION

As this series concludes, we pause to reflect on the journey we've shared, and look ahead with intention.

THE SPACE BETWEEN US

DAY 1 | LOOKING BACK

And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.

PHILIPPIANS 1:6

As we conclude our winter session, take a moment to look back on the journey we've shared.

Over the past several weeks, we've slowed down to pay attention to the "space between us." These are the places where relationships can feel strained or tender, where misunderstandings grow, where fear or hurt creates distance. Together, we explored what it means to let God shape us from the inside out so we can show up with more compassion, humility, patience, and presence.

This week, before looking ahead, we pause to remember: What has God been doing? What has been shifting in me? What has opened, softened, or grown? The journey doesn't end here, but today we simply take time to notice the ways God has been present.

For those following Jesus:

What has God shown you about Himself, or about yourself, that you don't want to forget?

For those exploring faith:

What stirred curiosity or hope in you during these weeks?

DAY 2 | NOTICE: WHAT GOD HAS BEEN DOING IN YOU

Sometimes God works so quietly that we don't recognize it until we pause long enough to notice.

Today, invite God into your remembering.

REFLECTION

Think back over the past several weeks. Was there a moment, such as a conversation, a story, or a practice that stayed with you? Was there a place where you felt stretched, encouraged, or comforted? What might God be forming there?

A SIMPLE PRACTICE // THEN & NOW

Spend a few minutes journaling a “Then & Now” observation in relationship to “the space between us”:

- At the start of the series, I felt...
- Today, I notice...

DAY 3 | LISTEN: A PRAYER OF EXAMEN FOR RELATIONSHIPS

Today, we shift from remembering to listening. This is a quiet, gentle space as we listen to the voice of the one who loves you.

GUIDED PRACTICE // SILENCE & IMAGINATION

1. Quiet your body. Take a few slow breaths.
2. Invite Jesus into your reflection: "Jesus, what would you like me to see?"
3. Let Him bring one relationship or moment to mind.
4. Ask:
 - What do You want me to release?
 - What do You want me to receive?
5. Rest in whatever comes—noticing without judging.

JOURNALING

Write down one thing Jesus seemed to highlight, even if it was only a feeling, a word, or a nudge.

DAY 4 | LOOKING FORWARD

What will you carry into the spring? What small faithful step is yours to take?

The work God begins in us is never meant to stay inside us. Formation is always meant to ripple outward into our relationships, our families, our community, and our church. So today we look ahead with hope.

REFLECTION

- What is one simple practice from this series you want to continue?
- Is there a relationship where you sense God inviting you to take a small step of love or humility?
- What do you want to ask God to form in you in the season ahead?

A SIMPLE PRAYER // LOOK AHEAD WITH HOPE

Open your hands and offer this simple prayer:

“Lord, continue your good work in me. Teach me to love. Shape me as you will.”



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