

FOUNDATIONS

"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.." Matt 7:24

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever felt a little lost in your faith? Like you know you believe in Jesus, but you're not always sure what you're supposed to **do** next? Many Christians find themselves in that place—saved, but uncertain about what it really means to walk as a disciple.

That's where Foundations comes in.

In Foundations, we will explore the **7 Rhythms of a disciple** that give us a clear snapshot of what the Christian life is supposed to look like. They aren't a checklist of spiritual chores or religious boxes to tick. Instead, they are patterns of life that keep us connected to Jesus, aligned with His Spirit, and growing into maturity. They show us the everyday practices that help us live a Jesus centered life.

Foundations goes beyond just giving you practical steps. This journey will help you discover not only **how a disciple lives**, but also the **foundational truths** that those rhythms are built on. These are truths worth more than a quick glance—truths that invite reflection, conversation, and real transformation.

As we embrace God's truth, it becomes easier to live the life He has planned for us. You'll find that <u>discipleship isn't about trying harder—it's about being rooted deeper</u>. And as you walk through this experience, you'll see how God's Word, prayer, repentance, community, serving, generosity, and sharing your story aren't just activities—they're the building blocks of a life shaped by Jesus.

This is the life of a disciple, built on firm *Foundations*.

The 7 Rhythms of Discipleship

Every relationship grows through consistent rhythms. A marriage thrives when there's regular communication, time together, and shared experiences. Friendships deepen when we show up, listen, and walk through life side by side.

The same is true in our relationship with God. Discipleship isn't about quick fixes or occasional inspiration—it's about consistent rhythms that root us in Him. These 7 rhythms are not boxes to check but ways to experience God more deeply every day.

1. WE	AND	GOD'S WORD REGULARLY.
"They devote	ed themselves to th	e apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to
the breaking	of bread and to pr	eaver." (Acts 2:42, NIV)

Daily devotion means intentionally spending time in God's Word and His presence. It's not about the quantity of verses but the quality of connection. When we open Scripture, we let God shape our hearts and renew our minds.

2. WE ____ TO GOD DAILY. "Pray continually." (1 Thessalonians 5:17, NIV)

Prayer is simply talking with God—and listening. It's more than reciting words; it's an ongoing conversation with your Father. Prayer invites God into the ordinary and anchors us in His power when life feels overwhelming.

3. WE AND TURN BACK TO GOD CONTINUALLY.

"Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord." (Acts 3:19, NIV)

Repentance isn't about shame—it's about freedom. It's choosing to turn away from sin, lies, and distractions, and turning back to God's truth. Repentance keeps our relationship with God honest and restores joy in walking with Him.

4. WE _____ OUR STORY BOLDLY. "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." (1 Peter 3:15, NIV) God has written His grace into your story. Sharing your story isn't about having all the answers—it's about testifying to what Jesus has done in your life. Your story can open the door for someone else to encounter Him. 5. WE _____ OTHERS FAITHFULLY. "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45, NIV) Serving is love in action. When we meet needs, lift burdens, and use our gifts to bless others, we reflect Jesus. Serving reminds us that discipleship is not only about growing upward with God but also outward toward others. 6. WE ____ GENEROUSLY. "Freely you have received; freely give." (Matthew 10:8, NIV) Generosity reflects the heart of God, who gave His Son for us. It's not just about money—it's about open hands with our time, talents, and resources. Giving generously declares that God is first and that we trust Him to provide. 7. WE _____ IN AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY WEEKLY. "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together...but encouraging one another." (Hebrews 10:24–25, NIV)

Discipleship is not a solo journey. We need each other. Authentic community provides encouragement, accountability, and strength to keep going. When we gather with other believers, we grow deeper and stronger in our faith.

These rhythms are the framework of Foundations. Each week, you'll not only learn *about* them—you'll practice them. Over time, they become habits that transform your relationship with God and shape the way you live.

Answer Key: read | study | talk | repent | share | serve | give | gather

SPEAKER NOTES WEEK 1 — WHO IS GOD?

"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness." (Colossians 2:6–7, NIV)

Every faith journey begins with one simple but life-shaping question: WHO IS?
How you see God will shape how you see
GOD IS ONE From the very beginning, God wanted His people to know He is not one among many, but the only God.
Moses declared the Shema :
"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is One." (Deut 6:4–5)
• Shema means more than hearing—it means to and to
• The <i>Shema</i> not only who God is, but also how that should impact the
FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH:
WHEN GOD IS, EVERYTHING ELSE
GOD IS "I AM" When Moses asked God His name, He answered: "I AM." (Ex. 3:14)
God is eternal, unchanging, and always
"Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born,!" John 8:58

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH:

WE LEARN WHO GO	DD IS THROUGH
A PERSONAL	WITH JESUS.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU WALK WITH JESUS?

JESUS LEADS US TO THE HEART OF THE FATHER

Hebrews 1:1–2 says: "In the past God spoke... but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son."

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH:

GOD LEADS HEARTS THAT . .

JESUS FILLS US WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

"I baptize you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."
(Mark 1:8, NIV)

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH:

THE LIVING GOD WANTS TO LIVE _____ US.

JESUS TRANSFORMS US THROUGH HIS FINISHED WORK.

Religion says, "Do more, try harder."
Relationship says, "Come _____, walk with Me."

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH:

GOD VALUES OVER PERFORMANCE.

Answer Key: God | everything | true God | listen | obey | declares | whole life | first | falls into place | WHO I AM | present | I AM | relationship | listen | in us | closer | relationship

Living the 7 Rhythms

When you see who God is—holy, eternal, personal, and present—the natural response is to orient your life around Him. That's where the rhythms begin.

- **Repentance:** God is worthy of your whole heart, mind, soul and strength. This week, set aside time to ask God to redirect your thinking, your affections, your energy to align with his heart.
- **Daily Devotion:** Begin a habit of opening His Word each day, even if it's just a few verses. Let His truth shape how you see Him and yourself.

These rhythms are how we walk with the God we've been learning about this week. They turn the truths of *Who God Is* into a lifestyle that actually transforms us.

THIS WEEK'S DEVOTIONS

Take a few moments each morning to read and dig deeper into these passages. Who were they written to? What do they say? What are they teaching you? How do they need to reshape your understanding?

Mon: Deuteronomy 6:4–5 (The Shema) **Tue:** Exodus 34:6–7 (God's attributes)

Wed: John 1:14 (God revealed in Jesus)

Thu: Romans 8:11 (Spirit of God in us)

Fri: 2 Corinthians 13:14 (God in relationship with us)

Pray like this: "God, I put You first in my life. Help me love You with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength."

JOURNAL / NOTES		

WEEK 2 — HOW DOES GOD SPEAK?

"Your word is a lamp to my feet, a light on my path."

Psalm 119:105

Communication is the heartbeat of every relationship. Think about a marriage or a close friendship—without listening and speaking, the relationship withers. The same is true with God. Last week we asked *Who is God?* This week we're asking, *How does God speak?*

The good news is that God has never been silent. From the very first words of creation to the quiet moments in your own life today, He is a God who communicates. Sometimes His voice thunders through Scripture. Other times it whispers gently through His Spirit. He speaks through the encouragement of people in your life, and even through the beauty of creation.

The real challenge isn't whether God speaks—it's whether we are tuning in. Just like a radio station that's broadcasting all the time, the question is whether our hearts are on the right frequency to hear Him.

God Speaks Through His Word

The first words ever recorded in Scripture are God speaking: "And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light." (Genesis 1:3, NIV) With a single command, light exploded into darkness. That's how powerful His Word is—when God speaks, things change.

WRITE PSALM 119:105

The incredible thing about the Bible is that it doesn't just tell us about God, it directs our steps. Think of it like driving in a storm at night. Headlights don't show you the entire journey, but they show you just enough so you can safely navigate the darkness. God's Word does the same. It may not tell you everything about tomorrow, but it will give you clarity for today. When there isn't space in our daily walk to hear and tune our hearts to God's word it is like we are "driving without headlights." We are trying to navigate through a dark world without God's light leading the way.

REFLECTION: WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST STRUGGLE WITH ENGAGING DAILY WITH SCRIPTURE?

God's Word is also authoritative. It is not just human ideas written about God—it is God revealing Himself to us. The Bible shapes our understanding of who He is, what He values, and how we are called to live. Without His Word, we're left to guess, but with it, we can walk in confidence.

When we choose the rhythm of obedience and repentance in our lives we are opening ourselves up for God's will to happen in every aspect of our life.

Rom. 12:1-2 ¹ And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. ² Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. NLT

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH: GOD'S WORD REVEALS GOD'S WILL

God Speaks Through His Spirit

Before leaving His disciples, Jesus promised, "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth." (John 16:13, NIV)

The Spirit whispers truth, convicts us of sin, comforts us in pain, and nudges us toward obedience. His voice will never contradict Scripture, because the Spirit and the Word always agree. Instead, He takes the truth of Scripture and applies it directly to our situation.

Think of the Spirit like a notification that pops up on your phone. Sometimes it's a gentle buzz reminding you of what matters. Other times it's an alert that demands your attention.

The Spirit speaks to remind, to guide, and to warn. Have you ever had a moment where you felt prompted to encourage someone or convicted to stop in your tracks? That wasn't random—that was God speaking through His Spirit.

The Spirit isn't a distant force; He is God's presence inside you. Just as we learned in Week 1 that you carry the Spirit into your daily life, now we see that He also speaks into your daily steps.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH: THE SPIRIT LEADS, CONVICTS, AND COMFORTS— ALWAYS POINTING US TO JESUS.

REFLECTION: IS THERE SOMETHING GOD HAS BEEN NUDGING YOU TO DO? HOW HAVE YOU RESPONDED?

God Speaks Through His People

God often uses others to confirm His Word in our lives. A timely text from a friend, a sermon that feels like it was written just for you, a mentor's gentle correction—all of these are ways God speaks through His people.

This is why community matters. When you step out of community, you silence one of the key ways God communicates. God created the Church as a body, not as scattered individuals. And one of the ways the body works is by speaking life and truth into each other.

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WRITE PROVERBS 27:17

Think about it: when you're holding a mirror close, you can only see part of your own reflection. But someone else can see parts of you that you can't. God designed us to hear His voice through brothers and sisters who sharpen us because they can see things about us that we aren't able to see.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH: GOD OFTEN SPEAKS TO US THROUGH OTHERS.

REFLECTION: WHO IN YOUR LIFE HAS GOD USED TO SPEAK TRUTH OR ENCOURAGEMENT INTO YOU?

God Speaks Through His Creation

Paul writes: "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse." (Romans 1:20, NIV)

Creation doesn't just exist—it points. From the vastness of the galaxies to the detail of a single cell, everything about our world reveals design. The balance of gravity, the tilt of the earth, the precision of ecosystems—all of it is finely tuned for life. It doesn't shout accident; it whispers intention.

And it's not just the universe out there—it's us. We were created with minds that long for meaning and hearts that long for relationship. Why? Because we were made in the image of a relational God. The beauty of creation and the design of humanity both declare the same truth: behind it all is a Creator who made us to know Him.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH:

CREATION POINTS TO THE CREATOR.

God Still Speaks Today

The writer of Hebrews reminds us, "In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe." (Hebrews 1:1–2, NIV)

God has never stopped speaking. Through His Word, by His Spirit, through His people, and even through His creation, He still communicates. We learn & hear the voice of God through his son Jesus. Over recent years, in many parts of the world where the Bible is restricted people report having dreams of Jesus. They dream he is calling them to himself, revealing himself to them and redirecting their hearts and lives into a relationship with God. Jesus is still speaking today.

But like a radio, we often have the dial set to the wrong station. Learning to follow Jesus means learning to tune in.

And here's the best part: when God speaks, He doesn't just want to give us information—He wants to bring transformation. His voice doesn't just fill our minds, it reshapes our hearts.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH: GOD IS SPEAKING TO PEOPLE WHO ARE LISTENING.

REFLECTION: WHAT "NOISE" IN YOUR LIFE MAKES IT HARDEST FOR YOU TO HEAR GOD'S VOICE?

Living the Rhythms

If God is a speaking God, discipleship is about learning to listen. The rhythms keep your heart tuned to His voice.

- **Daily Devotion:** His Word is the primary way He speaks. Pick one passage (like a Psalm or a teaching of Jesus) and sit with it every day this week.
- **Prayer:** Prayer isn't a monologue—it's a conversation. Take time not only to talk to God but to pause and listen for His Spirit.

THIS WEEK'S DEVOTIONS

Take a few moments each morning to read and dig deeper into these passages. Who were they written to? What do they say? What are they teaching you? How do they need to reshape your understanding?

Mon: Hebrews 1:1–2 — God has spoken through His Son.

Tue: 2 Timothy 3:16–17 — Scripture is God-breathed and equips us.

Wed: John 10:27 — My sheep listen to My voice.

Thu: Acts 13:2 — The Spirit speaks to the church.

Fri: Psalm 119:105 — God's Word is a lamp to my feet.

Pray like this: "Lord, open my ears to hear Your voice. Let Your Word guide my steps and Your Spirit lead me."

JOURNAL / NOTES				

WEEK 3 — WHERE IS GOD IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING?

"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."

Psalm 34:18, NIV

Life has a way of throwing us into moments we never planned for. A doctor calls with test results. A relationship falls apart. A prayer you've prayed for years seems unanswered. When suffering hits, it forces a question deep into our souls: *Where is God?*

If He is good, why does He allow pain? If He is powerful, why doesn't He stop it?

These aren't modern questions—they echo through the centuries. The psalmist cried out: "How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?" (Psalm 13:1, NIV). Even Jesus, hanging on the cross, cried out: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46, NIV).

God is not afraid of our questions. He invites them, because He is not distant from our pain. The story of Scripture shows us again and again that God is present, God understands, God redeems, and God brings hope in the middle of suffering.

The truth is that it is easy to feel far from God while we are suffering. It is easy to draw conclusions about Who God is, and who we are.

REFLECTION: WHAT IS YOUR NATURAL FIRST REACTION TO DIFFICULT SEASONS?

God Is Present in Our Pain

David wrote: "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." (Psalm 34:18, NIV)

David wrote these words after one of the lowest, strangest moments of his life. He was on the run from Saul, navigating enemy territory, and dealing with the loss of his homeland and people. He found that God wasn't distant in his distress.

In the ancient world, many believed suffering was a sign that God (or the gods) had abandoned them. If crops failed or sickness came, people assumed the gods were angry or absent. But David gives us a radically different truth: when we are brokenhearted, God doesn't move away—He draws near.

Imagine a parent hearing their child cry in the middle of the night. They don't roll over and ignore it. They rush to the room, pick the child up, and hold them close. That's the picture David paints. God isn't a distant observer to your pain; He is a present comforter in the middle of it.

And His nearness isn't passive—it's saving. David says God "saves those who are crushed in spirit." He doesn't always remove the pain, but His presence rescues us from despair. His nearness keeps us from being swallowed by hopelessness.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH: GOD DRAWS CLOSEST WHEN LIFE HURTS THE MOST.

REFLECTION: HOW HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED GOD'S PRESENCE

IN A PAINFUL SEASON?

God Understands Our Suffering

The Bible reminds us that Jesus isn't a stranger to pain. Isaiah foretold of Him: "He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain." (Isaiah 53:3, NIV)

Jesus knew hunger, exhaustion, betrayal, and grief. He wept at the tomb of His friend Lazarus. He was misunderstood by His family, abandoned by His closest followers, beaten, and crucified. Hebrews tells us: "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin." (Hebrews 4:15, NIV)

That means when you bring your pain to Jesus, He doesn't just sympathize—He empathizes. He has walked the same road. He knows what it feels like to cry, to ache, to long for God's comfort.

Have you ever had a friend who has walked through the same trial you are facing? Their words carry weight, because they've been there. That's why Jesus' presence in our pain is powerful —He's been there, and He walks with us still.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH: JESUS DOESN'T JUST KNOW ABOUT SUFFERING— HE HAS LIVED IT.

God Redeems Our Suffering			
WRITE ROMANS 8:28			

Notice Paul doesn't say all things are good. Cancer is not good. Divorce is not good. Death is not good. But God is able to take what was meant for harm and weave it into His good purposes.

Think about a goldsmith refining gold. The fire doesn't destroy it—it purifies it. The heat brings the impurities to the surface so they can be removed. Suffering has a unique way of bringing things that are unseen and untreated in our hearts and minds to the surface. God can't deal with what we don't reveal. In the same way that gold is made pure by fire, suffering refines our faith. It strips away what is false and strengthens what is true.

Joseph understood this when he told his brothers who had sold him into slavery: "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good." (Genesis 50:20, NIV) What others meant for evil, God used for redemption.God doesn't waste pain. He redeems it for His glory and for our growth.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH:

GOD NEVER WASTES PAIN - HE REDEEMS IT FOR HIS PURPOSE.

REFLECTION: CAN YOU LOOK BACK ON A PAINFUL EXPERIENCE AND SEE HOW GOD USED IT FOR GOOD?

God Brings Hope Through His Presence

Paul endured incredible suffering—shipwrecks, prison, beatings, hunger—yet he could write: "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all." (2 Corinthians 4:16–17, NIV)

Paul wasn't minimizing pain—he was magnifying perspective. Compared to eternity, even the hardest seasons that seem like they will never end are only temporary. Our suffering cannot compare the long lasting joy we will have in God's presence. In the meantime, God's Spirit renews us day by day.

Imagine running a marathon and every mile feels endless, but the finish line gives you strength to keep moving. Hope is like that. It doesn't erase pain, but it gives you endurance. And our hope isn't wishful thinking—it's anchored in eternity with Jesus.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH:

GOD GIVES US STRENGTH TODAY BY FIXING OUR EYES ON ETERNITY.

REFLECTION: WHAT DOES 2 COR 4:16-17 SAY ABOUT HOW OUR PRESENT COMPARES TO OUR ETERNAL FUTURE?

God Invites Us to Trust Him in Pain

The story of Job reminds us that even when we don't understand, we can trust God's character. Job lost everything—his health, his wealth, his family. Yet in the middle of his suffering he declared: "Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him." (Job 13:15, NIV)

Trust doesn't mean we have all the answers. It means we cling to the One who does. God's ways are higher than ours, and sometimes we won't understand until eternity why suffering happens. But faith says, "Even when I don't see it, I trust You."

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH:
FAITH HOLDS ON TO GOD EVEN
WHEN ANSWERS DON'T COME.

Living the Rhythms in Suffering

When life gets hard, the temptation is to pull away from God. But suffering is where the rhythms of discipleship become most life-giving:

- **Prayer:** Pour out your pain honestly to God—He can handle your questions.
- **Worship:** Choose to lift your eyes above the pain and declare God's goodness.
- **Sharing Your Story:** Your scars can give someone else hope.

THIS WEEK'S DEVOTIONS

Take a few moments each morning to read and dig deeper into these passages. Who were they written to? What do they say? What are they teaching you? How do they need to reshape your understanding?

Mon: Psalm 34:18 — The Lord is close to the brokenhearted.

Tue: Isaiah 43:2 — When you pass through the waters, I will be with you.

Wed: John 16:33 — In this world you will have trouble... take heart!

Thu: Romans 8:18 — Present sufferings vs. future glory.

Fri: 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 — God comforts us so we can comfort others.

Pray like this: "Father, remind me You are near when I'm hurting. Give me hope in the middle of hardship."

JOURNAL / NOTES	

Week 4 — Who Am I in Christ?

"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" 1 John 3:1, NIV

One of the most important questions you will ever answer is not just "Who is God?" but "Who am I?"

The world is loud with opinions about your identity. Some say you are the sum of your successes. Others define you by your failures. Some tie identity to possessions, career, or relationships. But God's Word tells a different story. Your truest identity is not something you achieve—it's something you receive in Christ.

When you know who you are in Christ, everything changes. Your worth is secure, your purpose is clear, and your future is steady.

WRITE OUT EPHESIANS 1:4-5

From Orphan to Child of God

Paul writes: "The Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children." (Romans 8:15–16, NIV)

Without Christ, we are spiritual orphans—disconnected, searching for belonging. But in Jesus, God doesn't just forgive us, He adopts us. He doesn't just tolerate us, He welcomes us as sons and daughters.

In Roman culture, adoption was not temporary—it was permanent and secure. An adopted child received full inheritance rights, just as if they had been born into the family. Once adopted, nothing could undo it. That's the picture Paul is giving us. In Christ, you are truly a part of His family.

Think about adoption in our world today. When a child is adopted, their identity shifts in a moment. They get a new family, a new name, a new inheritance. That's what God has done for us in Christ. When we receive his Spirit we can truly call God "Abba, Father."

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH: IN CHRIST, YOU ARE NO LONGER AN ORPHAN— YOU ARE A CHILD OF GOD.

REFLECTION: WHAT DOES ROM 8:15-16 REVEAL ABOUT HOW GOD ADOPTS US?

A New Identity and a New Purpose

Paul also says: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" (2 Corinthians 5:17, NIV)

Being in Christ doesn't just change your future—it changes your present. You are a new creation. The old labels, the old shame, the old way of life—they don't define you anymore.

The world says, "You are what you've done." Jesus says, "You are who I say you are." And who does He say you are? Forgiven. Chosen. Loved. Sent.

Think about a sports team when a new player is drafted. They put on the team jersey, and suddenly everything they do reflects the team they represent. In the same way, being in Christ means you carry His name and live for His purposes.

And notice—Paul says the old *has gone*. That's past tense. It's already finished. You don't have to drag your past into your present, because Jesus has already declared you new.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH

IN CHRIST, YOUR PAST DOESN'T DEFINE YOU— YOUR IDENTITY IN HIM DOES.

REFLECTION: WHAT "OLD LABELS" OR "OLD NAMES" IS GOD ASKING YOU TO LEAVE BEHIND?

Freedom from Shame and Fear

Jesus said "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." (John 8:36, NIV)

So many people live under the weight of shame—believing they are too broken, too flawed, too guilty for God to love them. Others live under the grip of fear—afraid of failure, afraid of rejection, afraid of the future.

But in Christ, shame is replaced by forgiveness, and fear is replaced by love.

WRITE OUT ROMANS 8:1-2

Think of a courtroom. You stand guilty, but instead of receiving punishment, the Judge steps down, takes your place, and declares you free. That's what Jesus has done.

Or picture someone shackled in chains. They may have lived so long with the weight of those chains that they think it's normal. But when Christ sets them free, the shackles fall off—and they can walk in freedom.

Freedom in Christ is not just the absence of shame or fear—it's the presence of joy, peace, and confidence in Him.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH:

IN CHRIST, YOU ARE FORGIVEN, FREE, AND FEARLESS.

Living as God's Beloved

John, the disciple closest to Jesus, often referred to himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." He wasn't bragging—he was living out of identity. He saw himself first and foremost as loved by God.

That's the invitation for every follower of Jesus. Not to strive for approval but to live from acceptance. Not to perform for God's love but to rest in it.

Think about nicknames. Sometimes we carry names from our past—words spoken over us, labels we've believed. But God has given you a new name: *Beloved*. That's your truest identity.

When you live as God's beloved, it changes how you see yourself—and it changes how you see others. Secure in your identity, you're freed to love and serve without fear.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH: IN CHRIST YOU ARE NOT REJECTED BUT ACCEPTED.

REFLECTION: WHAT WOULD CHANGE IN YOUR LIFE IF YOU LIVED EVERY DAY CONFIDENT IN GOD'S LOVE FOR YOU?

Living the Rhythms

Knowing who you are in Christ is not just a truth to believe—it's a rhythm to live.

- **Daily Devotion:** Each day, let God's Word remind you of who you are. Read passages like Ephesians 1 or 1 John 3 and underline every phrase about your identity.
- **Prayer:** Spend time listening for God's voice of affirmation. Let Him speak "You are my child" over you.
- **Sharing Your Story:** Your new identity is part of your testimony. When you share how Jesus changed your life, you remind yourself and others of God's grace.

THIS WEEK'S DEVOTIONS

Take a few moments each morning to read and dig deeper into these passages. Who were they written to? What do they say? What are they teaching you? How do they need to reshape your understanding?

Mon: 2 Corinthians 5:17 — New creation in Christ.

Tue: Romans 8:14–16 — Adopted as children of God.

Wed: Ephesians 1:4–5 — Chosen and predestined for adoption.

Thu: Galatians 2:20 — Christ lives in me.

Fri: 1 Peter 2:9 — A chosen people, royal priesthood, God's own.

Pray like this: "Jesus, thank You for making me new. Help me live from my true identity as Your child."

JOURNAL / NOTES				

Week 5 — The Church: God's People on Mission

"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." 1 Corinthians 12:27 We live in a hyper-individualistic world. Culture says, "You do you." Faith is often treated the same way—something private, personal, even isolated. But that's not how the Bible describes the Christian life. Following Jesus is never just "me and God." It's always "we and God."

The Church isn't a building you attend; it's a people you belong to. And when we live as God's people together, the world sees what He is like.

God's Family

Paul writes: "Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household." Ephesians 2:19, NIV

Notice that—God's household. Through Christ, we are brought into a new family. The Church is not just a crowd, it's a household.

Think about a healthy family. Meals are shared. Burdens are carried together. Celebrations are enjoyed. That's what God intended His Church to be. Not perfect, but committed to one another in love.

But let's be honest: families can also be messy. Conflicts happen. Misunderstandings arise. Yet in a healthy family, people don't walk away at the first sign of tension—they work through it because they belong to each other. The same is true in the Church.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH:

IN CHRIST, YOU DON'T JUST BELIEVE—YOU BELONG.

REFLECTION: HOW HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED THE CHURCH AS FAMILY?

The Body of Christ

Paul describes the Church this way: "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." (1 Corinthians 12:27, NIV)

Every believer has a role to play. Just like a human body, the Church functions best when each part is working. The eye sees, the hand serves, the feet carry. No part is unnecessary.

Imagine a symphony orchestra. Every instrument matters—the violins, the trumpets, the percussion. Alone, each instrument is limited. Together, they create something beautiful. That's the picture of the Church—different gifts working together in harmony to reveal Jesus to the world.

Paul takes it further in Ephesians: "From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." (Ephesians 4:16, NIV). Notice that growth doesn't come from one superstar member—it comes as each part does its work.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH:

EVERY BELIEVER HAS A PART TO PLAY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST.

Unity in Diversity

Paul continues: "There is one body, but it has many parts. But all its many parts make up one body. It is the same with Christ." (1 Corinthians 12:12, NIV)

The Church is a place of diversity—different backgrounds, cultures, gifts, and personalities. That diversity isn't a problem; it's God's design. But unity doesn't mean uniformity. Unity means we keep Jesus at the center.

In a stained-glass window each piece of glass is different in size, shape, and color. But when the light shines through, together they create a breathtaking picture. That's what happens when diverse people are united in Christ.

In Acts 2, we see this unity in action: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer... All the believers were together and had everything in common." (Acts 2:42, 44, NIV). That early community was marked by worship, generosity, prayer, and fellowship. Different people, one Spirit, one mission.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH:

GOD DESIGNED US TO BE DIVERSE BUT UNIFIED.

REFLECTION: WHAT MAKES UNITY HAPPEN IN A DIVERSE BODY?

Called to Belong and Build

Peter writes: "You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house." (1 Peter 2:5, NIV)

We aren't called to be spectators in the Church—we're called to be stones in the house, bricks in the wall, part of the structure God is building. That means the Church isn't built on the gifts of a few, but on the faithfulness of many.

Think about a construction site. Every brick matters. If one is missing, the wall is weaker. In the same way, your presence, your prayers, your service matter. When you invest in the Church, you're helping build something eternal.

The book of Acts shows us what this looked like practically: believers shared meals, prayed together, and met each other's needs. And the result?

"And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." (Acts 2:47, NIV).

The Church grew not through programs but through people faithfully living out their faith together.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH:

THE CHURCH IS NOT BUILT ON THE GIFTS OF A FEW BUT THE FAITHFULNESS OF MANY.

REFLECTION: WHAT'S ONE WAY YOU CAN ACTIVELY HELP BUILD GOD'S CHURCH?

The Church on Mission

The Church doesn't just exist for itself—it exists for the world. Jesus said: "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden." (Matthew 5:14, NIV).

When the Church lives out its calling, it becomes a light in the darkness. It becomes a community where the lonely find family, where the broken find healing, and where the lost find Jesus.

Consider a lighthouse. Its purpose isn't to keep light in—it's to shine for the sake of others. The Church is a lighthouse for a dark world.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH:
THE CHURCH EXISTS FOR THE WORLD.

REFLECTION: WHERE IS GOD CALLING YOU TO SHINE HIS LIGHT?

Living the Rhythms of the Church

The Church isn't just a Sunday gathering—it's a rhythm of life together.

- **Serving the Community:** God has given you gifts not just for you, but for the good of others. Step in and serve His body.
- **Prayer:** Pray not only for your needs, but for your brothers and sisters in Christ. Intercede for unity, strength, and boldness.
- **Worship:** When we gather and worship together, we remind the world—and ourselves—that Jesus is Lord.

THIS WEEK'S DEVOTIONS

Take a few moments each morning to read and dig deeper into these passages. Who were they written to? What do they say? What are they teaching you? How do they need to reshape your understanding?

Mon: Acts 2:42–47 — The early church in action.

Tue: 1 Corinthians 12:12–14 — One body, many parts.

Wed: Ephesians 2:19-22 — Members of God's household.

Thu: Matthew 16:18 — Jesus builds His Church.

Fri: Matthew 28:19–20 — The Great Commission.

Pray like this: "God, thank You for making me part of Your family. Show me my place in Your mission."

JOURNAL / NOTES				

Week 6 — Strongholds and Freedom in Christ

"The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds." (2 Corinthians 10:4, NIV)

Every follower of Jesus is in a battle. Not just against circumstances, not just against people, but against an enemy who wants to keep us stuck, discouraged, and ineffective.

The Bible calls these patterns of bondage "strongholds." A stronghold is any mindset, habit, or lie that holds us back from living in the freedom Jesus purchased for us. The good news? In Christ, strongholds can be broken.

Recognizing the Battle

Paul reminds us: "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." (Ephesians 6:12, NIV)

Your spouse is not the enemy. Your boss is not the enemy. The real battle is spiritual. The enemy's goal is not just to tempt you into sin, but to build a fortress of lies in your mind—a stronghold that keeps you believing you can't change, you're not free, or God isn't enough.

Think of a stronghold like a fortress built in your mind. Once the walls go up, lies can live inside unchecked, shaping how you think and how you live. That's what Satan tries to do in our minds: build walls of fear, shame, addiction, or pride that feel unshakable.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH:

STRONGHOLDS ARE REAL, BUT GOD'S POWER IS GREATER. **REFLECTION:** WHERE DO YOU FEEL MOST "STUCK" IN YOUR WAI K WITH GOD RIGHT NOW?

The Power of Repentance

Paul says: "The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds." (2 Corinthians 10:4, NIV)

One of those weapons is repentance. Repentance isn't just saying "sorry"—it's a turning. It's choosing to agree with God's truth instead of the enemy's lies.

Imagine walking in the wrong direction on a trail. Repentance isn't just admitting you're lost, or apologizing for taking a wrong turn—it's turning around and walking back toward life.

David modeled this in Psalm 51 after his sin with Bathsheba. He prayed: "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." (Psalm 51:10, NIV) Repentance doesn't push us away from God—it pulls us closer.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH:

REPENTANCE IS THE DOORWAY TO FREEDOM.

WRITE OUT PSALM 51:10:

Freedom Through Forgiveness

Another way strongholds lose their grip is through forgiveness.

Paul writes: "Forgive as the Lord forgave you." (Colossians 3:13, NIV)

Unforgiveness is one of the enemy's favorite footholds. When we refuse to forgive, bitterness grows, and bitterness becomes a stronghold. But when we forgive, we declare that the cross is enough—not just for us, but for others.

Think of holding a heavy rope in a tug-of-war. As long as you hold on, the battle continues. But when you let go, the tension breaks. Forgiveness is letting go of the rope and handing the hurt to God.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH: FORGIVENESS BREAKS THE ENEMY'S GRIP ON YOUR HEART.

REFLECTION: WHO IS GOD INVITING YOU TO FORGIVE SO YOU CAN WALK IN FREEDOM?

Living in Victory by the Spirit

Paul writes: "So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh." (Galatians 5:16, NIV)

Freedom isn't just about what you turn from—it's about who you walk with. The Holy Spirit doesn't just convict you of sin, He empowers you to overcome it.

Think about electricity. A lamp doesn't produce light on its own—it shines when it's plugged into the power source. In the same way, victory isn't about willpower, it's about Spirit power. When you walk by the Spirit, strongholds lose their hold.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH: FREEDOM ISN'T FOUND IN WILLPOWER— IT'S FOUND IN SPIRIT POWER.

REFLECTION: HAVE YOU EVER TRIED TO OVERCOME BY WILLPOWER? WHAT ENDED UP HAPPENING?

Putting On the Armor of God

Paul paints a vivid picture of spiritual warfare: "Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes." (Ephesians 6:11, NIV)

- The belt of truth counters the lies of the enemy.
- The breastplate of righteousness guards your heart.
- The shield of faith extinguishes the flaming arrows of doubt.
- The sword of the Spirit—the Word of God—cuts down deception.

Notice Paul says to *stand*. Victory isn't about charging the battlefield on your own; it's about standing in what Jesus has already accomplished.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH:

IN CHRIST, WE FIGHT FROM VICTORY NOT FOR VICTORY

REFLECTION: WHICH PIECE OF THE ARMOR DO YOU NEED TO "PUT ON" MOST INTENTIONALLY RIGHT NOW?

Living the Rhythms of Freedom

Breaking strongholds isn't a one-time event—it's a daily rhythm of walking in truth.

- **Repentance:** Regularly invite God to search your heart and realign you to His truth.
- **Prayer:** Pray against the enemy's lies and declare God's promises over your life.
- **Worship:** Declare God's victory even before you feel it. Worship shifts your perspective from fear to faith.

THIS WEEK'S DEVOTIONS

Take a few moments each morning to read and dig deeper into these passages. Who were they written to? What do they say? What are they teaching you? How do they need to reshape your understanding?

Mon: John 8:36 — If the Son sets you free, you are free indeed. **Tue:** 2 Corinthians 10:3–5 — Weapons to demolish strongholds. **Wed:** Galatians 5:1 — It is for freedom Christ has set us free.

Thu: James 4:7–8 — Resist the devil and he will flee.

Fri: Ephesians 6:10–11 — Be strong in the Lord; put on His armor.

Pray like this: "Lord, tear down every stronghold in my life. Set me free to walk in Your truth and Spirit."

JOURNAL / NOTES				

Week 7 — Stewardship and Generosity

"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously."

2 Corinthians 9:6, NIV

Money, time, and resources are some of the biggest tests of discipleship. Jesus said: "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:21, NIV). How we handle what God gives us reveals what we believe about Him.

The Bible calls this stewardship. Stewardship means recognizing that everything we have belongs to God, and we are managers—not owners. When we live this way, generosity becomes a natural overflow.

God Owns It All

Psalm 24:1 declares: "The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it."

That means your paycheck, your home, your car, your calendar, your talents—all of it belongs to Him. You are a manager of resources that are on loan from God.

When renting a house you don't own it, but you take care of it because it's entrusted to you. That's stewardship—recognizing God as the true Owner and living as faithful managers.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH:

EVERYTHING WE HAVE BELONGS TO GOD—WE ARE MANAGERS, NOT OWNERS.

DEEL ECTION: LIONA DOES IT CHANGE VOLID DEDSDECTIVE TO

REFLECTION: HOW DOES IT CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE TO SEE YOURSELF AS A MANAGER, NOT AN OWNER, OF YOUR RESOURCES?

The Danger of Scarcity

The world says, "Hold on to what you can. There's not enough to go around." That's a scarcity mindset. But God invites us to live with abundance in Him.

In Haggai 1, God's people held tightly to their resources but felt like they never had enough: "You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill." (Haggai 1:6, NIV). Scarcity isn't about how much you have—it's about how much you trust.

Think about someone clutching sand in their fist. The tighter they hold, the more slips through their fingers. But when you open your hands, you're in position to both give and receive.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH: SCARCITY SHRINKS YOUR FAITH— GENEROSITY GROWS IT.

REFLECTION: WHERE DO YOU MOST FEEL THE PULL OF A SCARCITY MINDSET?

The Joy of Generosity

Paul says: "God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7, NIV). Generosity isn't about guilt—it's about joy. It's not about the size of the gift, but the heart behind it.

In Mark 12, Jesus pointed out a widow who gave two small coins. Others gave out of their wealth, but she gave out of her poverty—all she had. And Jesus said she gave more than anyone. Generosity is not measured by amount but by sacrifice.

When a child gives their parent a handmade gift they treasure it, not because of its monetary value, but because it came from the child's heart. That's how God sees our giving.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH: GENEROSITY ISN'T ABOUT AMOUNT— IT'S ABOUT THE HEART.

WRITE OUT 2 CORINTHIANS 9:7
THIS WEEK?
REFLECTION: WHAT'S ONE WAY YOU CAN GIVE CHEERFULLY

Trusting God With Provision

Jesus said: "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matthew 6:33, NIV).

Generosity is ultimately about trust. Do I trust God enough to give, believing He will provide? When we put God first, we declare that He—not money—is our provider.

When God provided manna in the wilderness. God told Israel to gather only what they needed each day. If they hoarded it, it spoiled. God was teaching them to trust Him daily.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH:

GIVING IS A DECLARATION OF TRUST — GOD IS MY PROVIDER.

REFLECTION: WHERE IS GOD ASKING YOU TO TRUST HIM WITH PROVISION?

Sowing Seeds That Last

Paul writes: "You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion." (2 Corinthians 9:11, NIV). Generosity is about sowing seeds. When you give, you're planting into God's kingdom. Some seeds grow immediately; others take time. But every seed of generosity produces eternal fruit.

Think about planting an apple tree. One seed can grow into a tree that produces thousands of apples over its lifetime. That's the multiplication effect of generosity—what feels small in your hand can produce harvests for generations.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH: GENEROSITY PLANTS SEEDS THAT OUTLAST YOU.

REFLECTION: WHAT "SEEDS" ARE YOU SOWING RIGHT NOW THAT WILL IMPACT ETERNITY?

Living the Rhythms in Generosity

Generosity isn't just about money—it's about a lifestyle of open hands.

- **Sacrificial Generosity:** Give not just what's comfortable, but what costs something.
- **Serving the Community:** Use your time and gifts to build others up.
- **Sharing Your Story:** Testify to God's faithfulness in provision—it encourages others to trust Him too.

THIS WEEK'S DEVOTIONS

Take a few moments each morning to read and dig deeper into these passages. Who were they written to? What do they say? What are they teaching you? How do they need to reshape your understanding?

Mon: Psalm 24:1 — The earth is the Lord's and everything in it.

Tue: Malachi 3:10 — Test me in this... and see if I won't open the

floodgates.

Wed: 2 Corinthians 9:6–8 — Sow generously, reap generously.

Thu: Matthew 6:19–21 — Where your treasure is, there your heart will be.

Fri: Acts 20:35 — It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Pray like this: "God, all I have belongs to You. Teach me to live openhanded and to give with joy."

JOURNAL / NOTES				

Week 8 — Living on Mission

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:19–20, NIV)

The Christian life isn't meant to end with us. What God has done *in* you, He wants to do *through* you. From Genesis to Revelation, the story of God is a sending story. God blesses His people so they can be a blessing to the nations.

Mission isn't just for a few—it's for everyone. To follow Jesus is to live sent.

God's Heart for the World

From the beginning, God's plan was global. He told Abraham: "All peoples on earth will be blessed through you." (Genesis 12:3, NIV). Israel was chosen not as an exclusive club, but as a light to the nations.

And Jesus carried that mission forward: "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." (Luke 19:10, NIV). That's why the Church exists—to continue His mission of redemption.

In a relay race each runner carries the baton for their stretch, then passes it on. God has placed the baton of His mission in our hands. We are the link between those who carried it before and those who will carry it in the future.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH: GOD'S MISSION DEPENDS ON GOD'S PEOPLE.

REFLECTION: HOW DOES IT CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE TO SEE YOURSELF AS PART OF GOD'S GLOBAL STORY?

Everyday Mission

When we hear "mission," many people think of crossing oceans. But mission starts by crossing the street.

Jesus said: "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden." (Matthew 5:14, NIV). Your workplace, your school, your neighborhood—they are all mission fields.

Think about salt. A saltshaker doesn't do any good sitting on the table. It has to be sprinkled out. Wherever the salt lands is where it brings flavor. In the same way, we are called to be salt wherever we land in life.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH: MISSION ISN'T OUT THERE—IT'S RIGHT HERE

REFLECTION: WHERE IN YOUR DAILY LIFE IS GOD CALLING YOU TO BE "SALT AND LIGHT"?

The Power of Your Story

You don't have to know all the answers to share your faith. You just have to share your story. In John 9, a man healed by Jesus said: "One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" (John 9:25, NIV). That's the power of testimony—it points people to Jesus by showing His work in your life.

In an online world good reviews bring good results. When you're considering a product, you don't want technical specs first—you want to hear from someone who has actually used it. That's what your story does. It's a living review of God's grace.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH: YOUR STORY BRINGS GOD GLORY.

REFLECTION: WHAT'S ONE PART OF YOUR STORY YOU COULD SHARE WITH SOMEONE THIS WEEK?

Joining God in His Global Mission

Jesus' command was clear: "Go and make disciples of all nations." (Matthew 28:19, NIV).

Some are called to go across cultures and borders. Others are called to send, to support, to pray, and to give. But all of us are called to play a part in God's global mission.

In an orchestra, not every musician plays the same part. Some carry the melody, others provide harmony, and some keep the rhythm steady. Even the instruments that seem quiet or small are essential to the beauty of the whole. The mission of God works the same way—it's bigger than any one person or church. It takes all of us, in different roles, playing together in harmony to reveal His glory to the world.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH: **EVERY MEMBER IS PART OF THE MISSION.**

A Lifestyle of Worship and Service

Mission isn't an event or a trip—it's a lifestyle. Paul says: "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship." (Romans 12:1, NIV).

Every act of love, every word of kindness, every moment of service is part of living on mission. Worship and mission aren't separate—mission is worship in action.

Have you ever been gifted a candle, then never got around to using it? It can look and smell amazing but it will never serve it's purpose or show its full potential until it burns. As Christians, we can have amazing qualities that are hidden from the world until we are spent in pursuit of the purpose we were created for. We were made to burn brightly, and fill the world with the aroma of Christ. Worship is choosing every day to pursue the purpose of our creator.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH:

MISSION IS NOT A TRIP YOU TAKE BUT A LIFE YOU LIVE

Living the Rhythms in Mission

Mission becomes real when we practice it in rhythm with God.

- **Sharing Your Story:** Boldly tell what God has done in your life.
- **Prayer:** Pray for those far from God and ask for boldness to step out.
- Worship: Live a life that points to Jesus, showing the world He is worth it.

THIS WEEK'S DEVOTIONS

Take a few moments each morning to read and dig deeper into these passages. Who were they written to? What do they say? What are they teaching you? How do they need to reshape your understanding?

Mon: Acts 1:8 — You will be my witnesses.

Tue: Matthew 5:14–16 — You are the light of the world.

Wed: Romans 10:13–15 — How will they hear unless someone is sent?

Thu: 1 Peter 3:15 — Always be ready to give an answer. **Fri:** John 20:21 — As the Father sent me, I am sending you.

Pray like this:

"Jesus, send me into my world as Your witness. Use my story and my life to point people to You."

JOURNAL / NOTES				