

REFRAME

Connecting Faith & Life

REFRAME

Connecting Faith & Life

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

REFRAME PARTICIPANT GUIDE
COPYRIGHT ©2014 REGENT COLLEGE

All rights reserved worldwide. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, sold or licensed without the express written consent of Regent College with the sole exception that use of electronic and physical copies of the material are permitted for use by individuals participating in an authorized *ReFrame* discussion group.

Written by Adam Joyce
Produced by Russell Pinson
Edited by Kate Harris, Mark Mayhew, and Cari Rees
Graphic Design and Layout by Free Agency Creative

PUBLISHED 2014 BY
Regent College Publishing for the Regent College Marketplace Institute
marketplace.regent-college.edu

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
The Washington Institute for Faith, Vocation & Culture
washingtoninst.org

REGENT COLLEGE PUBLISHING
5800 University Blvd, Vancouver BC V6T 2E4 Canada
regentpublishing.com
info@regentpublishing.com

Scriptures taken from THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. New International Version™ and “NIV” are registered trademarks of Biblica, Inc.®. Used with permission.

Extracts from The Book of Common Prayer, the rights in which are vested in the Crown, are reproduced by permission of the Crown’s patentee, Cambridge University Press.

ISBN 978-1-57383-513-8

Cataloguing in Publication information is on file at Library and Archives Canada.

ReFrame Sessions

Part 1: The Story We Find Ourselves In

01 Session 1: The Reframing Story

07 Session 2: Cultural Stories

Part 2: The Story of Scripture

13 Session 3: Creation & Fall

19 Session 4: Israel's Calling

25 Session 5: Jesus the King

31 Session 6: New Heavens & New Earth

37 Session 7: The Church & The Spirit

Part 3: The Ongoing Story

43 Session 8: Strangers & Exiles

49 Session 9: Ambassadors

57 Session 10: Joyful Living

Part 1: The Story We Find Ourselves In

The Reframing Story

“The truth of the story Jesus told was clear to the disciples because it made sense of everything.”

- Paul Williams



5 min

Overview

INTRODUCTION

If Jesus is the redeemer of all things, how does faith reframe every aspect of our lives? How does Christianity connect to the whole of who we are? Is Jesus relevant in an increasingly complex world? These are the types of questions many of us wrestle with today.

ReFrame aims to help us live out our faith in everyday life, encouraging us to encounter Jesus afresh and allowing his story to shape our own. This first session explores how a fragmented and complex world can tempt Christians to either withdraw from, or assimilate to, the culture around them. However, the true story of Jesus enables Christians to resist these temptations and to live integrated and faithful lives.

Read Colossians 1:16 – 20.



40 min **Episode Outline & Notes**

Complexity – Modern life is getting more complex and fragmented.

Integration – We experience competing cultural messages and can find it difficult to integrate life and faith.

Assimilate or Withdraw – The complexity and challenge of living out our faith tempts Christians to assimilate or withdraw.

Jesus – The true story of Jesus makes sense of everything, bringing meaning and purpose to all of life.





5 min

Emmaus Road Reflection

“As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them.” Luke 24:15

What has God been saying to me through this episode (e.g. encouragement, challenge)?

What was significant or new? What questions did it raise?

Where is your Emmaus Road? Where are you in your journey of discipleship with Christ? Where do you want to see more of Jesus in your life?

“A story can do so much more than just teach you. It can transform you.”

- **Sally Lloyd-Jones**



30 min **Discussion**

What types of complexity and fragmentation characterize modern life? In what ways are our lives becoming more or less complicated?

What are some areas of life that Christians struggle to connect with their faith?

What questions are you currently wrestling with? What do you hope to learn from ReFrame?



10 min Engage

ACTIVITY

Our faith in Christ means something for every aspect of our lives. However, sometimes it is still difficult to see Jesus in the different places we find ourselves. Think about this past week. Call to mind some of the different places, activities, and situations you were involved in. Where did you see Jesus? Where did you feel his presence? Where did you not feel connected to him? Be concrete in your examples.

“The call of the Gospel, the claims of God, and the lordship of Christ in our lives has to do with all of who we are.”

- Ruth Padilla DeBorst

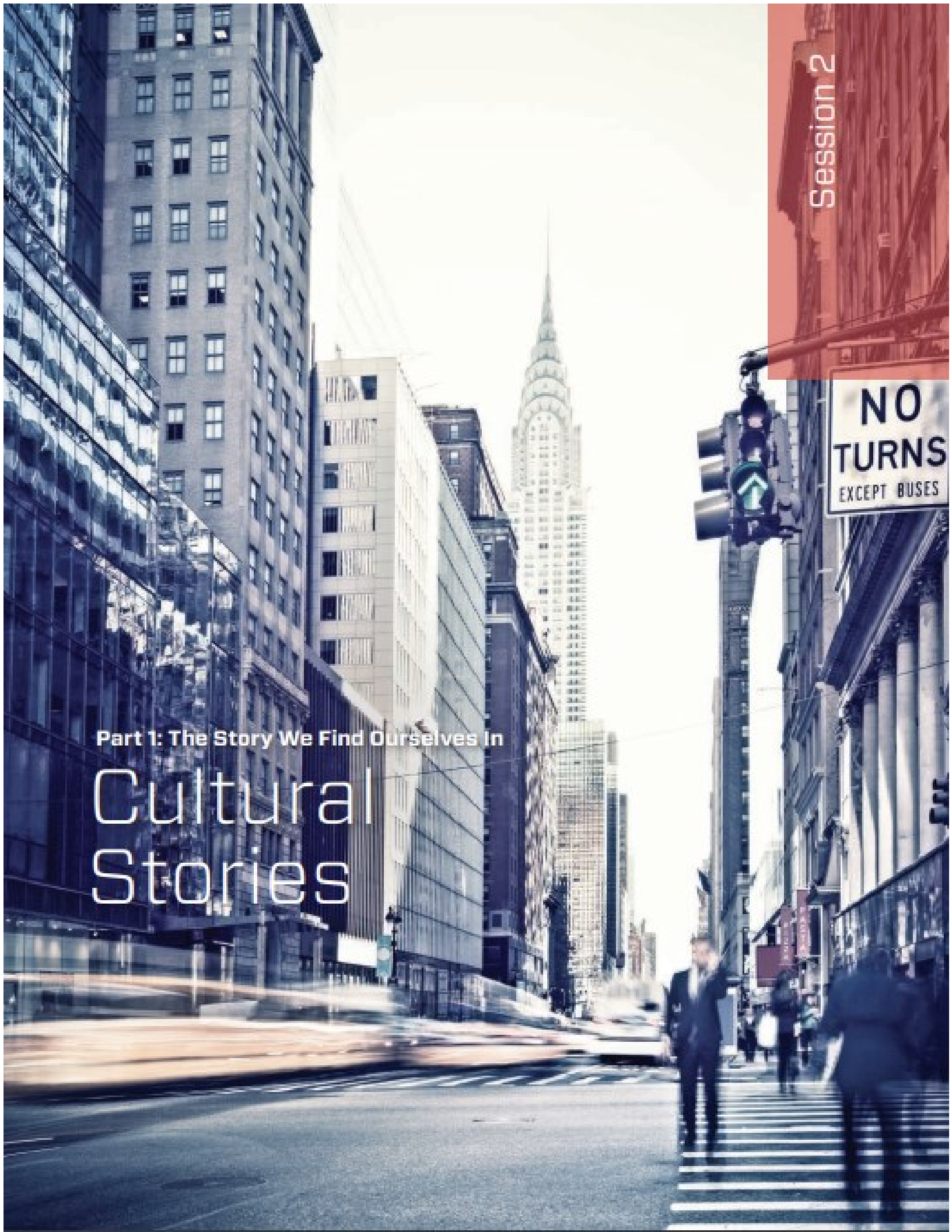
PRAY

Leader to life, Path to truth, our Lord Jesus Christ; you led Joseph to Egypt, and the people of Israel through the Red Sea; and Moses to Mount Sinai, and his people to the land of promise. And you traveled with Cleopas and his companion to Emmaus. Now, I pray you, Lord, lead me and my companions to travel in peace on the journey before us. Save us from the visible and invisible enemy and lead us safely to the place we are headed. For you are our way and our truth and our life. Glory and worship to you now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

- Hovhannes Garnets'i

Part 1: The Story We Find Ourselves In

Cultural Stories



“One of the features of the postmodern world is the fluidity of its culture and therefore the fluidity of its identities.”

- James Houston



5 min

Overview

RECAP

Last session explored how, in a complex world, it can be difficult to see how our faith connects with all of life. Instead of connecting our faith with all of life, we can be tempted to either assimilate or withdraw from the culture around us.

Since the last session, where have you experienced or noticed any examples of the temptation to either assimilate or withdraw?

INTRODUCTION

Who am I? How does my faith in Jesus affect how I answer that question? How does our culture shape our response to this question of identity? Is there a conflict? As Christians, the story of Scripture and the person of Jesus shape the whole of who we are. And yet we often experience tension with our culture, which provides alternate answers to this question. We are told we must choose who we want to be, rather than receive our identity as a gift given by God.

This session discusses some of the ways our culture shapes us, and why this so often leads to a crisis of identity.

Read Romans 12:1-2.



40 min Episode Outline & Notes

Key characteristics of our culture contribute to our contemporary identity crisis:

Dislocation – Tradition is treated with skepticism, which creates a break with the past. We're cut off both from our history and from the future.

Invention – Individuals have the right to choose who they want to be. We exercise this choice through consumption – buying and selling our identity.

Fluidity – Our identities are constantly changing in line with cultural trends and fashions. We constantly ask the question, “Who am I now?”

Constraint – Infinite choice at the personal level is held together by conformity at the public level. Our private and public lives are divided, creating a conflict between them.



5 min

Emmaus Road Reflection

“As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them.” Luke 24:15

What has God been saying to me through this episode (e.g. encouragement, challenge)?

What was significant or new? What questions did it raise?

“The question, ‘Who am I?’ gets settled once and for all in the statement, ‘I AM.’ We are, because he is.”

- **Sarah Williams**



30 min **Discussion**

What was Christine struggling with in how her identity was being shaped?

What are the cultural messages that try to shape who we are? What does culture tell us makes a happy and full life?

Where do you feel cultural pressures in your life?

What activities help you, or could help you, remember that your identity is rooted in Christ?



10 min Engage

ACTIVITY

We are surrounded by cultural messages that are trying to shape our identity (e.g. advertising, movies, workplaces). These messages have an underlying story about what it means to be a person – defined by what you do, or have, or feel. Part of connecting faith to all of life involves being aware of the patterns of the world around us, and in our own lives.

Next time, bring an example of something in your week that represents a cultural story about identity – positive or negative. This could be an advertisement, article, song, product, place, conversation, or experience you had. Take a photo, bookmark a website, write down an idea, or bring something to share next time.

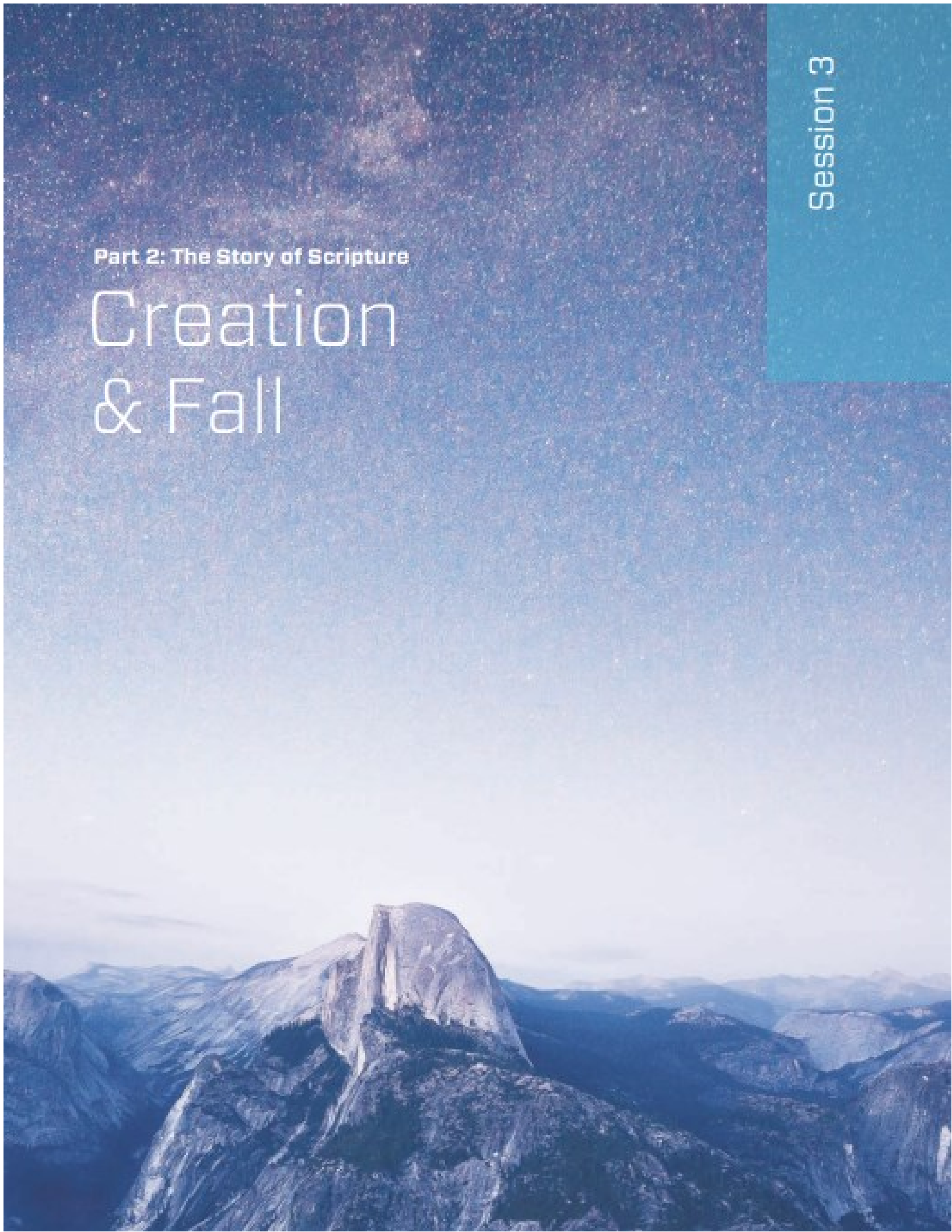
PRAY

Lord, to be turned from you is to fall, to be turned to you is to rise, and to stand in you is to abide forever. Grant us in all our duties your help, in all our perplexities your guidance, in all our dangers your protection, and in all our sorrow your peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- Augustine

Part 2: The Story of Scripture

Creation & Fall



“When our relationships with God, creation, and other humans are right, biblical faith proposes that all of God’s creation will know *shalom* – a Hebrew word that means fullness of life, wellbeing.”

- Iain Provan



5 min

Overview

RECAP

Last session discussed how different aspects of our culture can confuse our answer to the question, “Who am I?” These cultural stories draw our gaze away from Jesus and lead to an identity crisis, creating confusion and frustration about who we are. By contrast, Sarah Williams argued that the question “Who am I?” is best answered by being rooted in the biblical story. It is only within this narrative that we meet the person of Jesus Christ and are able to rest confidently in our true identity.

If you brought a tangible object, photo, link, or experience that serves as an example of underlying stories about identity, share it with the group.

How easy, or hard, was it to identify and evaluate the underlying stories?

INTRODUCTION

Over the next five sessions, we are going to cover the key moments in the scriptural story. This session starts with the beginning – the account of the creation and fall. Genesis tells us why God created the world and humanity, and his purposes for both. God’s creation was good, but this goodness was catastrophically marred through the fall. As the image-bearers of God, we are nevertheless called to cultivate this goodness in our relationships with God, others, and creation. **Read Genesis 1:1-5, 26-31.**



40 min **Episode Outline & Notes**

Temple – God created the cosmos and ordered it. The cosmos is like a sacred temple, but it is not itself divine.

Humanity – We are made in the image of God; humans are called to be kings (culture makers) and priests (culture caretakers).

The Fall – The Fall broke our relationships, causing alienation and diminishing shalom (fullness of life), but does not negate the goodness of creation. In the brokenness of the world, God is working to redeem creation.

Vocation – We are invited to participate with God in this work of redemption. Shalom is restored in the cosmos through reconciled relationships with God, each other, and creation.



5 min

Emmaus Road Reflection

“As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them.” Luke 24:15

What has God been saying to me through this episode (e.g. encouragement, challenge)?

What was significant or new? What questions did it raise?

“The biblical narrative helps us to understand that work itself has an inherent purpose, not just an instrumental purpose. The work itself matters.”

- **Amy Sherman**



30 min **Discussion**

What tension did Hugo struggle with? What was creating this tension?

What do Genesis 1 and 2 tell us about who we are and God’s purposes for creation? What does the Fall mean for God’s original purposes?

How could remembering the beginning of the biblical story change how we think about our vocations and our culture?

Where do you experience tension between faith and other areas of life? Understanding the creation story helped resolve Hugo’s tension, what difference might this make for the tensions you experience?



10 min Engage

ACTIVITY

Coffee beans provide a tactile reminder of God's good work of creation. Even though a raw coffee bean is good, you probably would not want to eat it. It requires work – roasting, grinding, and brewing – in order to turn it into coffee. Such work, the work of people like Hugo, echoes God's original work and is rightly called good.

Recall those times when you've had good coffee with family and friends (or if you don't like coffee, remember when you've shared a good meal), when coffee has been a gift from God for enjoyment or for fostering friendship. The many moments of making and sustaining are part of everyone's vocation. Think about the times where God's good work of creation is reflected and continued through your work in the world.

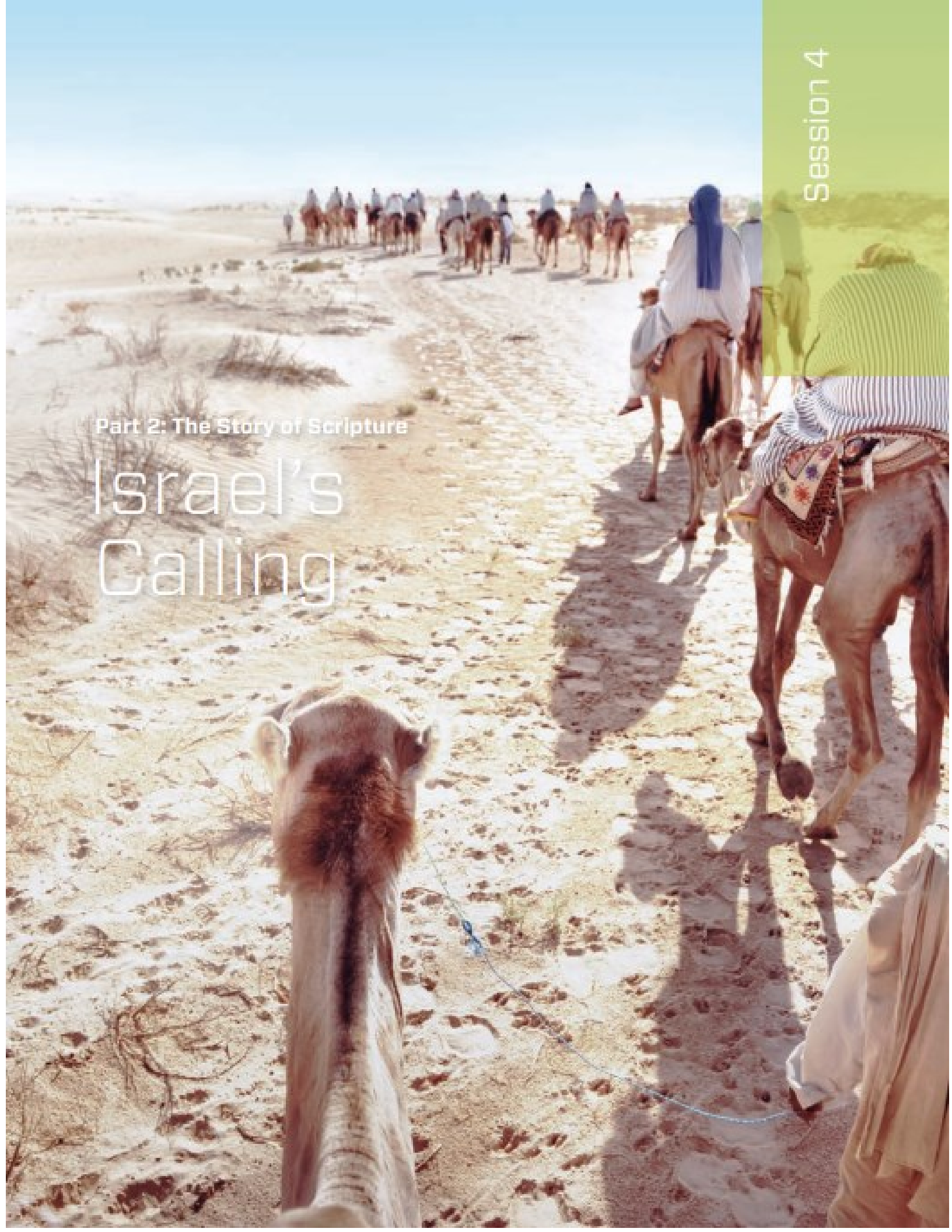
PRAY

Give us grace, O Lord, to work while it is day, fulfilling diligently and patiently whatever duty you appoint us to do; doing small things in the day of small things, and great labours if you summon us to any; rising and working, sitting still and suffering, according to thy word. Go with us, and we will go, but if you do not go with us, send us not; go before us, if you put us forth; let us hear thy voice when we follow. Hear us, we beseech you, for the glory of your great name.

- Christina Rossetti

Part 2: The Story of Scripture

Israel's Calling



“God has taken an ordinary people like Israel, like the church today, and has done extraordinary things not because we are extraordinary, but because he is an extraordinary God.”

- Soong Chan-Rah



5 min

Overview

RECAP

Last session explored the story of creation and our vocation as human beings. God’s original creation was good, but this goodness became catastrophically marred through the Fall. As the restored image-bearers of God, we are called to cultivate shalom as kings and priests in our relationships with God, others, and creation.

When this story is forgotten, we create a false sacred/secular divide between our faith and the rest of life. The true story, as John Dickson mentioned, is that “Everywhere we step is sacred. The Fall does not negate the goodness of creation... We will see glimpses of the good everywhere.”

Since the last session, where have you seen “glimpses of the good” (e.g. home, workplace, community, culture, creation)?

INTRODUCTION

This session focuses on God’s faithfulness to the people of Israel, and how Israel’s story is part of our family history as Christians. The story of Israel helps us see how our faith makes a difference in a complex and messy world. Indeed, God calls ordinary people to trust him and blesses them so that they might be a blessing to others. God is with us – in our failures and our faithfulness – and continues to work through us to redeem this broken world.

Read Genesis 12:1-7.



40 min Episode Outline & Notes

Abraham to David

Called to trust – God moves the story along by calling ordinary people to trust and obey.

Blessed to be a blessing – The people of Israel are to be God's redemptive agents, seeking shalom in every aspect of daily life and being a blessing to the world.

David to Exile

In exile, it looked like God had failed to keep his promises; but God keeps the story moving even when his people fail him.

Exile to Jesus

Against all expectations, God brings the story to a magnificent fulfillment in Jesus and promises to redeem all of creation.



5 min

Emmaus Road Reflection

“As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them.” Luke 24:15

What has God been saying to me through this episode (e.g. encouragement, challenge)?

What was significant or new? What questions did it raise?

“One of the wonderful things to me about the Bible is that there really are no heroes. The stories of Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph and the brothers... they are full of people like us that do stupid things and are still in the story. Nobody gets ejected.”

- Eugene Peterson



30 min **Discussion**

What struck you about Rich Dean's fear about working as a lawyer?
What changed for him?

What was God's purpose in calling Israel? How did God work in the life of Israel and ordinary people?

Rich Dean faced complex situations. Are there situations or areas of life that are impossible to redeem? Should Christians be involved? Discuss why or why not.

What complex situations have you experienced? What can you learn from the story of God's relationship with Israel in these situations?



10 min Engage

ACTIVITY

God calls us, like Israel, to be a blessing to others through acts of everyday faithfulness. Remember a time when someone helped you during a difficult time through an act of kindness. Or when someone blessed you with a simple gesture. What impact did this have on you? If appropriate, share this experience with the group.

Now think of someone you would like to encourage. It could be a friend, a family member, or a colleague. Before the next session, try to do something to encourage and bless them. This could involve taking the person out for a meal or coffee or writing them a note. Tell them what you appreciate about them. Be specific in your encouragement.

PRAY

God, you called your servant Abraham from Ur in Chaldea, watching over him in all his wanderings, and guided the Hebrew people as they crossed the desert. Guide and guard us your children who, for the love of your name, journey through this life. Be our companion on the way, our guide at the crossroads, our strength in weariness, our defense in dangers, our shelter on the path, our shade in the heat, our light in the darkness, our comfort in discouragement; that through your guidance, we may arrive safely at the end of our journey and, enriched with grace and truth, may return to our homes filled with lasting joy.

- Codex Calixtinus

Part 2: The Story of Scripture

Jesus the King



“Jesus is more than a Saviour. Jesus is the King, and he is creating a kingdom in which he is the ruler. That’s the message of the story of the Bible – that God will dwell with us, through Jesus, so that we can become the people of God in this world.”

- **Scot McKnight**



5 min

Overview

RECAP

Last session showed that the story of Israel is part of our family history as Christians. Throughout the history of Israel, God calls ordinary people to trust him and serve as his redemptive agents of blessing to the world. Even when we fail, God is faithful and continues to work through us and move creation’s story to fulfillment in Christ. God’s promise to Abraham was that he would make the Israelites “a great nation to be a blessing to all nations.”

Since last time, how have others been a blessing to you through small acts of everyday faithfulness?

INTRODUCTION

This session focuses on Jesus Christ as the climax of the story – the fulfillment of all the Old Testament scriptures (Luke 24:27). He is the true image of God, and true Israelite, who redeems humanity through his person, work, and words. Jesus is both Saviour and Lord, and his redemptive work affects everything, which gives meaning to all of life and culture – including our ordinary activities. The gospel is therefore more than personal salvation; it is the invitation to participate in a renewed life for a renewed world.

Read John 1:1-18.



40 min **Episode Outline & Notes**

First Century Israel – Israel returned from exile in Babylon, but after 400 years they are still waiting for God to restore Israel and free them from pagan rulers.

Messiah – Jesus fulfills the Old Testament expectation for a Messiah and a true king.

Mighty Words and Deeds – Jesus reveals what God is like, providing a renewed vision of what it means to be fully human.

Holiness – Holiness is not about a single moment of salvation, but a life engaged in people-keeping – acts of loving your neighbour.



5 min

Emmaus Road Reflection

“As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them.” Luke 24:15

What has God been saying to me through this episode (e.g. encouragement, challenge)?

What was significant or new? What questions did it raise?

“Christ came to make us whole, restoring all the broken pieces, which means we can’t isolate our Christianity out to the side.”

- **Mariam Kamell**



30 min **Discussion**

When you think about Jesus being part of the larger story of Scripture, how does it change the way you think about him and his life?

What difference does it make to recognize Jesus as both Saviour and King?

What does Jesus show us about what God is like? What does Jesus reveal about what it means to be human and what it means to be holy?



10 min Engage

ACTIVITY

Jesus' lordship and redemptive work affects every aspect of our lives. Christine's understanding of her vocation was reframed when she connected her daily activities (at home, community, workplace) with Christ's calling to love others and help them thrive – "people-keeping" as Rikk Watts reminds us.

Write down the activities in your life that are easy to connect to people-keeping, the ones that contribute to the lives of others. Then write down an activity where it is difficult for you to see a contribution to the flourishing of others. If you're comfortable, share the activity you find difficult with the group. As a group, discuss how you might reframe this activity. How does it, or could it, be connected to people-keeping?

"What is our end, what is our purpose? Well, our end, our purpose, is to be like Christ. We are made in the image and likeness of Christ."

- Hans Boersma

PRAY

*Christ be with me, Christ within me,
 Christ behind me, Christ before me,
 Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
 Christ to comfort and restore me,
 Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
 Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
 Christ in hearts of all that love me,
 Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.*

- Patrick



Session 6

Part 2: The Story of Scripture

New Heavens & New Earth

“Every human being asks questions of eschatology, of what the future will be like. What we believe about the future actually affects the way that we live our lives now, which is why the language of a new heaven and new earth matters.”

- Steve Garber



5 min

Overview

RECAP

Last session discussed how Jesus is the climax of the story, the one who fulfills God’s promises to Israel and changes everything as Saviour and Lord. Christ provides a renewed and full vision of what it means to be human, offering us a truly full life. Rikk Watts said, “Holiness is about people-keeping,” pointing to how Christ calls us to embody neighbourly love in every area of life.

Since your last meeting, where in your own life have you observed examples of people-keeping? What about more broadly in your neighbourhood, workplace, city, politics, locally, and globally?

INTRODUCTION

This fourth scriptural segment looks at how God promises to transform all of creation in the new heavens and new earth through the resurrection of Christ. As citizens of this promise, Christians are called to be holy foretastes, living previews of this final act of redemption.

Read Revelation 21:1-4.



40 min **Episode Outline & Notes**

The Resurrection – The resurrection is God’s vindication of Jesus and an unexpected fulfillment of Israel’s hopes.

Jesus’ Resurrected Body – Jesus’ resurrected body affirms the goodness of physical creation, acts as a sign of the new heavens and the new earth, and challenges misconceptions we may have about heaven.

New Heavens and New Earth – The resurrection points to the promise of cosmic shalom – the complete transformation and renewal of creation.

Citizens of Heaven – As citizens of heaven, we are to faithfully live out the story of Scripture as a sign and foretaste of this final restoration.



5 min

Emmaus Road Reflection

“As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them.” Luke 24:15

What has God been saying to me through this episode (e.g. encouragement, challenge)?

What was significant or new? What questions did it raise?

“God’s calling us to be people whose lives give to other people this foretaste of what is coming in the future kingdom. This is what God wants me to be. He wants me to be this foretaste bringer.”

- **Amy Sherman**



30 min **Discussion**

Why did Vincent feel so helpless? Where have you experienced a sense of hopelessness when seeing the brokenness of the world around us?

What are common cultural pictures of heaven? How do these pictures compare with Christ’s resurrection and the promise of our own resurrection?

Was there anything from the session that was new, significant, or raised questions for you, related to your understanding of heaven?

How does the promise of the new heavens and the new earth make a difference today? How might it make a difference for what we do now?



10 min Engage

ACTIVITY

We live between Jesus' resurrection and the promise of new heavens and new earth; the Kingdom is here but not fully. This means we experience tension – difficult moments when we encounter the world as it was not meant to be. However, God promises that our labour is not in vain, and Jesus' resurrection is God's ultimate commitment to restore all of his creation and dwell with us.

The prayer below is an expression of hope, a testament that God will use our lives, vocations, and occupations to witness for Christ and redeem a broken world – even if we can't see that today.

Before the next session use this prayer to pray for the brokenness around you: a difficult job situation, a hurting friend or colleague, a struggling neighbourhood, broken institutions and systems in our society and world. Remember God's resurrection promise that through Christ, everything will be made new. Consider saying this prayer in those places of brokenness, or as you begin each day.

“One of the things Iranaeus said was that the glory of God is a human being fully alive. I think that that's a profound truth.”

- J.I. Packer

PRAY

God of heaven and earth, we pray for your kingdom to come, for your will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. Teach us to see our vocations and occupations as woven into your work in the world. We ask for your great mercy, for ourselves and those around us. Give us eyes to see that our work is holy to you, O Lord, even as our worship is holy to you. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

- Steven Garber

Part 2: The Story of Scripture

The Church & The Spirit



“The descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost means that we can never be mere spectators in God’s story. We are participants.”

- Bruce Hindmarsh



5 min

Overview

RECAP

Over the last four sessions, we have explored the story of Scripture – the story of God’s work to redeem people and creation. Last time we considered the completion of this redemptive work, and how the resurrection of Christ is a sign of God’s promise to transform all of creation in the new heavens and new earth. As citizens of this promise, Christians are called to live as a sign, a holy foretaste of this final act of redemption.

If you prayed for God’s “kingdom to come” since last session, where did you pray? What did you ask for God to heal? What, if anything, did you see differently as you prayed?

INTRODUCTION

How do we enter into the story? In this final session on Scripture’s story, we see how at Pentecost, God gives the Holy Spirit to empower the church. It is not enough to simply know the story; we must also live the story. The Holy Spirit empowers us to participate in the story and God’s work of redemption in the world.

Read Acts 2:1-4.



40 min **Episode Outline & Notes**

Participants – The Holy Spirit makes it possible for us to be more than observers or spectators of the story.

Renewed – The Spirit gives us a renewed mind, a renewed life, and adopts us into the triune family of God.

The Church – Just as Jesus ascends and the Spirit descends, the church also moves in two directions – the Spirit binds Christians together and missionally sends them out.

Continuation – The Spirit moves the story through the centuries and across geographies.



5 min

Emmaus Road Reflection

“As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them.” Luke 24:15

What has God been saying to me through this episode (e.g. encouragement, challenge)?

What was significant or new? What questions did it raise?

“We work with God in the church to build up the body of Christ and then we have the scattered church, and we carry the gospel – we carry justice, we carry shalom into the world, participating with God in his work in the world.”

- Ross Hastings



25 min

Discussion

What did Mary struggle with? What changed for her?

When have you felt you went from being a spectator to being a participant – from just knowing about the Biblical story to being “pulled through the frame”?

Why was Pentecost significant for the early church? What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the early church and today?

What is your experience of the Holy Spirit? How vital is life in the Spirit for living the Christian life?



15 min Engage

ACTIVITY

The large candle represents the Holy Spirit, the light and life that sustains each of us in our faith. The Spirit empowers and sends us to carry God's light into the world. The tea candle represents your call to be a light – to bring truth and light to the world around you. As your candle is lit, notice that the flame from the large candle is not diminished, rather the light increases.

Share with one another where you want to experience more of the Holy Spirit in your life. Pray for the Holy Spirit to fill the group and send you into the world as faithful bearers of God's light.

Before the next session, pray each morning for the Holy Spirit to use you as a light to the world in ordinary, practical ways. Then, at the end of the day, pray for God to show you how the Spirit used you as a light. Record what the Spirit reveals to you in your guide or personal journal.

PRAY

O Lord, who has mercy upon all, take away from me my sins, and mercifully kindle in me the fire of your Holy Spirit. Take away from me the heart of stone, and give me a heart of flesh, a heart to love and adore you, a heart to delight in you, to follow and enjoy you, for Christ's sake.

- Ambrose

Part 3: The Ongoing Story

Strangers & Exiles



“The task of the church is to live as resurrection people in between Easter and the final day, as a sign of the first and a foretaste of the second.”

- **N.T. Wright**



5 min

Overview

RECAP

The previous five sessions explored the big chapters of the biblical story. Starting with creation and fall, then the calling of Israel, the climax in Jesus, and the ending in new heavens and earth. We live in the middle of this story. As we anticipate the story's end, the Holy Spirit pulls the church through the frame, inviting us into God's mission by seeing our vocations as part of God's work to bring shalom throughout his creation.

Since the last session, have you experienced or seen the Holy Spirit at work in your life and the wider world? If so, where?

INTRODUCTION

How do we live out this story? How do we engage the world around us? For the next two sessions, we will explore how God calls all Christians to live as ambassadors. Rather than simply assimilating or withdrawing from culture, we participate in God's mission to witness to and redeem culture.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-20.



40 min **Episode Outline & Notes**

Assimilate or Withdraw – Christians living in exile can be tempted to either assimilate or withdraw from the culture around them.

Ambassadors – Our true citizenship is in the kingdom of God, and so we are called to be ambassadors of this kingdom.

Embassy – Ambassadors need an embassy – a community in which to gather, be nurtured, and be sent from.

Church – The embassy for Christians is the local church, which gives humanity a foretaste of heaven. It is also the residence of the King of kings, Jesus Christ.



5 min

Emmaus Road Reflection

“As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them.” Luke 24:15

What has God been saying to me through this episode (e.g. encouragement, challenge)?

What was significant or new? What questions did it raise?

“I think as Christians we actually should be the best visionaries. We should be the people that are able to have hope in making a difference when all others are without hope because we’re living in that hope of a new kingdom.”

- **Katherine Leary Alsdorf**



30 min

Discussion

Like Fran, why do you think we are tempted to withdraw from our culture?

What are the similarities and differences between the exile we experience and the exile Daniel and the Israelites experienced? What can we learn from Daniel about engaging culture?

Where are you experiencing exile, and what difficulties do you experience there? What does it mean to be an ambassador in that place?

How is your church a local embassy? How might your church help sustain you as an ambassador? What is it doing well? What needs to change?



10 min Engage

ACTIVITY

God works through our vocations in the world. Think of a place where God has placed you as an ambassador, a place you know and spend time in regularly (perhaps the place you prayed for in Session 6).

Before the next session, ask God to open your eyes as you go into this place or community:

- What is good in this place that I can celebrate and cultivate?
- What brokenness in this place grieves me?

As God opens your eyes to see, continue to pray for that place and ask:

- How can I help bring more of God's light and love – God's shalom?
- Who do I need to work with to do this?

Write down what you observe and pray over it before the next session.

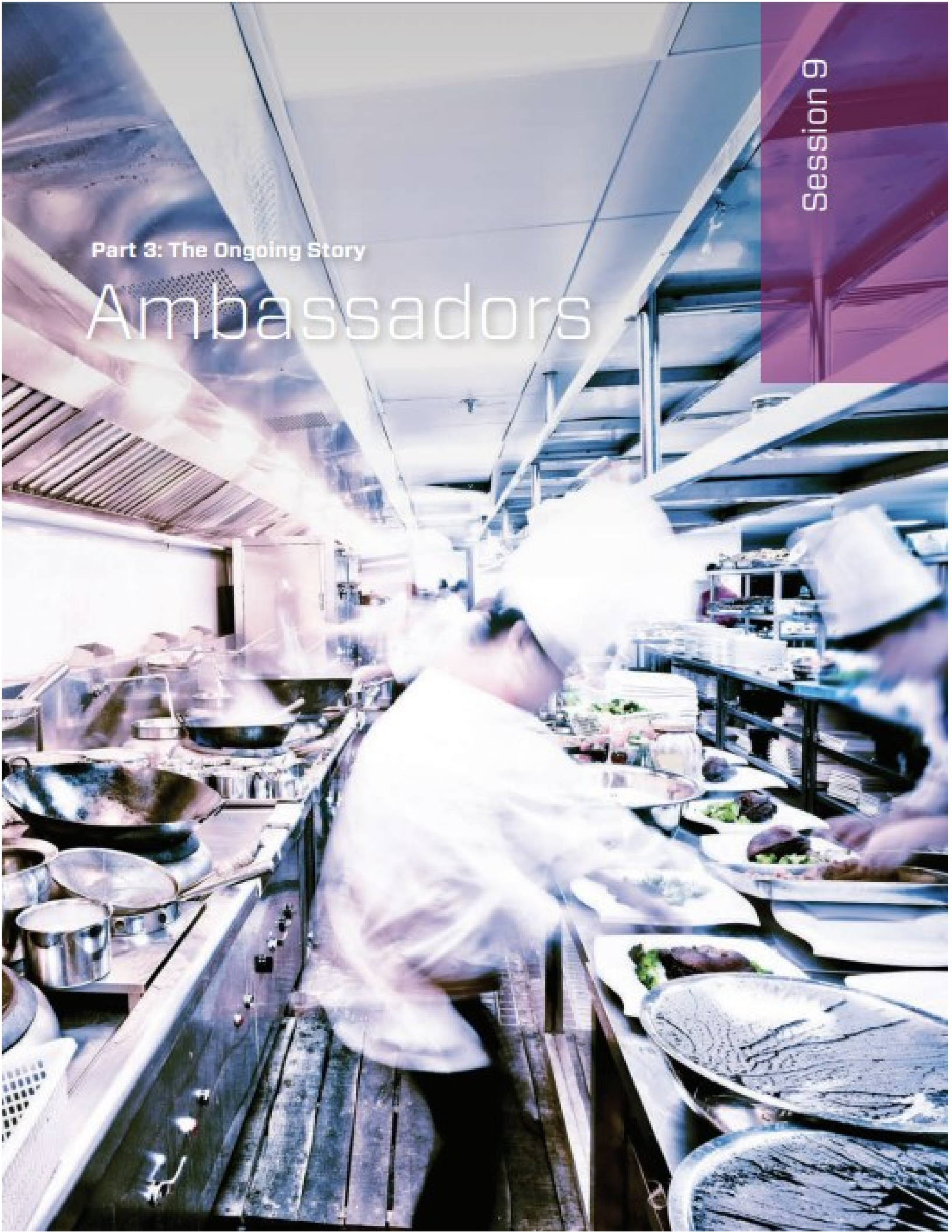
PRAY

Our Father, each day is a little life, each night a tiny death; help us to live with faith and hope and love. Lift our duty above drudgery; let not our strength fail, or the vision fade, in the heat and burden of the day. O God, make us patient and pitiful one with another in the fret and jar of life, remembering that each fights a hard fight and walks a lonely way. Forgive us, Lord, if we hurt our fellow souls; teach us a gentler tone, a sweeter charity of words, and a more healing touch. Sustain us, O God, when we must face sorrow; give us courage for the day and hope for the morrow. Day unto day may we lay hold of Thy hand and look up into Thy face, whatever befall, until our work is finished and the day is done. Amen.

- Francis of Assisi

Part 3: The Ongoing Story

Ambassadors



“There’s no hierarchy of vocations in God’s kingdom. Every Christian is ultimately sent as a missionary – an ambassador of Christ – to some part of God’s world.”

- **Paul Williams**



5 min

Overview

RECAP

The last session began an exploration of God’s call for us to be ambassadors in the context of exile. As ambassadors of Christ, we need an embassy – a local church – to form and nurture us. This community acts as a foretaste of heaven and sends us into the world to participate in God’s mission to redeem all of life, human beings, and the creation itself.

How was your experience of seeing yourself and your vocation through the lens of an ambassador? What were you able to celebrate in the place you considered since the last session? What grieved you?

INTRODUCTION

We are called to be ambassadors, but how do we actually live as ambassadors? What does this look like? In this session, through the example of Daniel, we see that doing the diplomatic work of Christ involves being formed by the local church, knowing God’s mission, learning the cultural language, and engaging in diplomacy.

Read Jeremiah 29:4-7.



40 min Episode Outline & Notes

God calls us to be ambassadors, but how do we do this?

Establish an Ambassadorial Community – We gather with other Christians to nurture our identity in Christ and foster our missional intent.

Know the Mission – Our stories only make sense in light of God’s story of his work in the world. Our vocations only make sense in light of God’s vocation.

Learn the Language – Seek to understand the influences that shape our society and how the gospel speaks to them. Recognize the goodness and brokenness in the world around us.

Do the Work of Diplomacy – We act to reframe where we are in light of God’s purposes and cultivate flourishing for those around us.



5 min

Emmaus Road Reflection

“As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them.” Luke 24:15

What has God been saying to me through this episode (e.g. encouragement, challenge)?

What was significant or new? What questions did it raise?

“We want to be the kind of company that the community wished existed if we weren’t there.”

- Don Flow



15 min **Discussion**

What aspects of ambassadorship stood out for you in the stories of George Sanker (teacher) and Jennifer Wiseman (astrophysicist)?

Know the Mission: Don Flow works in the automobile industry. How did he reframe the purpose of his business from a biblical perspective?

Learn the Language: What did Don Flow identify as the dominant secular view of the purpose of business? What issues did he have with how that got worked out in practice?

Diplomacy: How did Don change the way he practiced business within his company and with his customers?



25 min Engage

ACTIVITY

Christians are called to be ambassadors wherever God has placed them. How can we do this? This exercise invites you to practice, as a group, how you might engage and reframe somewhere God has placed you as an ambassador.

Context: Have someone share where God has placed them as an ambassador (e.g. the place you identified in Session 8, your workplace, neighbourhood, etc.). Once the person has shared, pray for the group: “Lord open our eyes and imaginations to see you and your perspective in this context.”

Now brainstorm together the following questions:

Know the Mission: How could you reframe the purpose and intent of this area of life in light of God’s story? Why does God care about this?

Hint: Think of themes or biblical metaphors from the course (e.g. made in the image of God, flourishing relationships with each other and creation, culture-making, creating, cultivating, people-keeping, etc.)

Learn the Language: How does our culture define the purpose of this area of life?

How does the purpose, and its practical outworking, relate to God's purposes? What is in alignment and good? What is out of alignment and broken? Where have we lost our way?

Hint: If you did the exercise from the last session, share your observations about what was good and what was broken with the group. Invite the group to collectively share their insights and experiences.

Diplomacy: What ideas do you have for practical changes that could bring about more of God's presence and human flourishing? What changes could be made within your sphere of influence? What changes could we advocate for at a public, corporate, or institutional level?

Hint: Start by thinking about small and simple changes. What are you empowered to do? Don't feel the burden to fix everything. What can you nudge in a kingdom direction? This could be the countercultural way you treat people, speak about your work, run meetings, decorate your space, your purchasing habits, your mission statement, etc. Think about examples from stories in earlier ReFrame sessions.

Take some time before the next session to answer these questions yourself.



“For every believer, your vocation, your professional life, your family life, all of that has to be enmeshed in some sense with your following of Christ.”

- **Jennifer Wiseman**

PRAY

Almighty God our heavenly Father, you declare your glory and show forth your handiwork in the heaevns and in the earth: deliver us in our various occupations from the service of self alone, that we may do the work you give us to do in truth and beauty and for the common good; for the sake of him who came among us as one who serves, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.”

- “For Vocation in Daily Work” from the *Book of Common Prayer*

Part 3: The Ongoing Story

Joyful Living



“As I grow closer to Jesus, following him into my calling, what I discover is this joy that the world can’t take away. And so, I don’t necessarily have success. I don’t necessarily have recognition. But I do have joy that nothing can take away.”

- **Andy Crouch**



5 min

Overview

RECAP

If Jesus is the redeemer of all things, what does this mean for every aspect of our lives? This is the question ReFrame has explored. The full scriptural story opens our eyes to see and encounter Jesus more clearly in every area of life. Only when we know the story and understand ourselves as ambassadors of Christ’s good news can we live reframed lives and faithfully participate in God’s big story of redemption.

What ways have you been exploring the vocation of an ambassador of Christ since the last session?

INTRODUCTION

A reframed understanding of the gospel gives confidence and joy in the midst of daily life. The good news of Christ in the Scriptures frees us for an abundant life of work and rest.

Read Luke 24:30 - 32.



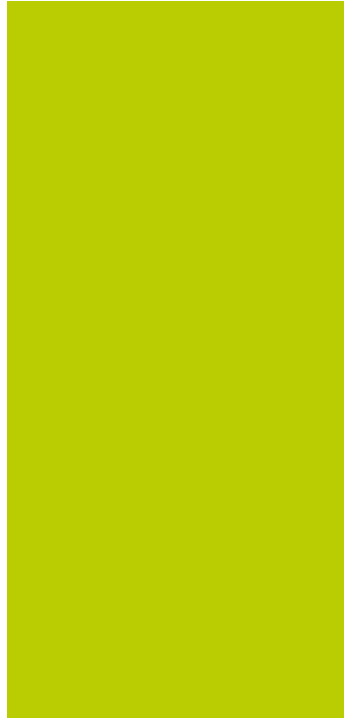
40 min **Episode Outline & Notes**

The story of the disciples' encounter with Jesus on the road to Emmaus takes the following shape:

Encounter – Jesus encounters us in the midst of our fragmentation and confusion.

Understand – Jesus reframes our understanding of ourselves and the world, by explaining the biblical story.

Respond – We can live with joy and confidence as Christ's ambassadors.





5 min

Emmaus Road Reflection

“As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them.” Luke 24:15

What has God been saying to me through this episode (e.g. encouragement, challenge)?

What was significant or new? What questions did it raise?



35 min **Discussion**

What does joy and confidence look like in the midst of the sorrows, heartaches, and disappointments of life – not only yours but of the wider world? In what do we place our trust and hope?

What have you seen with fresh eyes during ReFrame? What questions are you still wrestling with?

Why sustains us as ambassadors on our journey of discipleship?

What is God saying to you, your church, and your community about how you can be an ambassador to the culture around you?

“It’s all of Grace. So, to live in Christ is to live a gracious life, and to live in grace means you are always living in gratitude.”

- Jim Houston



5 min

Engage

PRAY

Leader to life, Path to truth, our Lord Jesus Christ; you led Joseph to Egypt, and the people of Israel through the Red Sea; and Moses to Mount Sinai, and his people to the land of promise. And you traveled with Cleopas and his companion to Emmaus. Now, I pray you, Lord lead me and my companions to travel in peace on the journey before us. Save us from the visible and invisible enemy and lead us safely to the place we are headed. For you are our way and our truth and our life. Glory and worship to you now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

- Hovhannes Garnets'i

Continuing the Journey

Having completed ReFrame, what shape will your ongoing journey take? These next pages offer a few suggestions.

Encounter Jesus in the everyday

Pray. End each day with a prayer. Where have I encountered Christ in my life, work, and relationships today? Are there places of frustration or pain in which I need to ask Jesus to meet me?

Gather. During the week, gather a group of two or three to pray into the challenges and opportunities you're encountering as you seek to live out your faith in all of life.

Participate in Christ's mission in the world

Get involved. What's going on in your local church? Commit to an existing program or project.

Start a missional community. Are there others in your church, workplace, or neighbourhood with a common vision to participate in Christ's renewing work in the world? Gather together to seek God for concrete ways to engage, and combine your efforts for greater impact.

Share ReFrame. Are there other who would benefit from participating in ReFrame? Tell them about the resource or even lead a course yourself.

Deepen your understanding of Jesus' work in the world

THE WASHINGTON INSTITUTE

The Washington Institute helps individuals and institutions recover a deeper understanding of vocation through a range of articles, mentorship, and retreats, as well as through consulting with companies, organizations, and institutions.

washingtoninst.org

REGENT COLLEGE

Regent College, a graduate school of theology in Vancouver, Canada, provides a range of learning opportunities for people seeking to live out their faith in all of life.

MARKETPLACE INSTITUTE – Provides curriculum, events, and other resources designed to equip people to live as Christ’s ambassadors in their daily work with particular interest in business, science, politics, and the environment.

rgtn.net/marketplace

REGENT AUDIO – Listen to intelligent, thought-provoking, and vibrant theological audio from Regent College faculty and other world-renowned theologians. Learn on-the-go about science and faith, arts, Bible, marketplace, history, ethical and social issues, and more in mp3 download or DVD format.

rgnt.net/audio

SUMMER PROGRAMS – The most extensive theological summer program in the world, with intensive one- to two-week courses taught in Vancouver, Canada, by leading theologians and professors from around the globe. Summer courses are a great way to deepen your theological understanding without the rigours of a regular academic term.

rgnt.net/summer

GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS – Designed to prepare you to live out your God-given vocation, immerse you in a diverse community of believers, and equip you to engage thoughtfully and intelligently with the wider culture. Choose from a range of Masters degree programs that can be completed through a combination of in-residence and distance education courses.

rgnt.net/programs

Prayers
Throughout
the Ages

SESSION 1 & 10

Leader to life, Path to truth, our Lord Jesus Christ; you led Joseph to Egypt, and the people of Israel through the Red Sea; and Moses to Mount Sinai, and his people to the land of promise, and you traveled with Cleopas and his companion to Emmaus. Now, I pray you, Lord lead me and my companions to travel in peace on the journey before us. Save us from the visible and invisible enemy and lead us safely to the place we are headed. For you are our way and our truth and our life. Glory and worship to you now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Hovhannes Garnets'i

(c. 1180 – 1245) was an Armenian monk and hermit

SESSION 2

Lord, to be turned from you is to fall, to be turned to you is to rise, and to stand in you is to abide forever. Grant us in all our duties your help, in all our perplexities your guidance, in all our dangers your protection, and in all our sorrow your peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Augustine

(354 – 430) was a pastor, theologian, and bishop of Hippo Regius (present-day Annaba, Algeria).

SESSION 3

Give us grace, O Lord, to work while it is day, fulfilling diligently and patiently whatever duty you appoint us to do; doing small things in the day of small things, and great labours if you summon us to any; rising and working, sitting still and suffering, according to Thy word. God with us, and we will go, but if you do not go with us, send us not; go before us, if you put us forth; let us hear Thy voice when we follow. Hear us, we beseech you, for the glory of your great name.

Christina Rossetti

(1830- 1894) was an English devotional writer and poet.

SESSION 4

God, you called your servant Abraham from Ur in Chaldea, watching over him in all his wanderings, and guided the Hebrew people as they crossed the desert. Guide and guard us your children who, for the love of your name, journey through this life. Be our companion on the way, our guide at the crossroads, our strength in weariness, our defense in dangers, our shelter on the path, our shade in the heat, our light in the darkness, our comfort in discouragement; that through your guidance we may arrive safely at the end of our journey and, enriched with grace and truth, may return to our homes filled with lasting joy.

Codex Calixtinus

is an illustrated manuscript from the 12th century that includes sermons, songs, and advice for pilgrims traveling the Way of St. James (El Camino de Santiago).

SESSION 5

*Christ be with me, Christ within e,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.*

Patrick

(387 – 461) was a missionary and bishop to the Celtic people of Ireland.

SESSION 6

God of heaven and earth, we pray for your kingdom to come, for your will o be done on earth as it is in heaven. Teach us to see our vocations and occupations as woven into your work in the world. We ask for your great mercy, for ourselves and those around us. Give us eyes to see that our work is holy to you, O Lord, even as our worship is holy to you. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Steven Garber

is a teacher, writer, and founding principal of The Washington Institute for Faith, Vocation, & Culture.

Adapted from Visions of Vocation by Steven Garber. © 2014 by Steven Garber. Used by permission of InterVarsity Press, P.O. Box 1400, Downers Grove, IL 60515, USA. www.ivpress.com

SESSION 7

O Lord, who has mercy upon all, take away from me my sins, and mercifully kindle in me the fire of your Holy Spirit. Take away from me the heart of stone, and give me a heart of flesh, a heart to love and adore you, a heart to delight in you, to follow and enjoy you, for Christ's sake.

Ambrose

(340 – 397) was archbishop of Milan and a key figure during the Arian controversy.

SESSION 8

Our Father, each day is a little life, each night a tiny death; help us to live with faith and hope and love. Lift our duty above drudgery; let not our strength fail, or the vision fade, in the heat and burden of the day. O God, make us patient and pitiful one with another in the fret and jar of life, remembering that each fights a hard fight and walks a lonely way. Forgive us, Lord, if we hurt our fellow souls; teach us a gentler tone, a sweeter charity of words, and a more healing touch. Sustain us, O God, when we must face sorrow; give us courage for the day and hope for the morrow. Day unto day may we lay hold of Thy hand and look up into Thy face, whatever befall, until our work is finished and the day is done. Amen.

Francis of Assisi

(1181 – 1226) was a Catholic friar, priest, and founder of the Franciscan Order.

SESSION 9

Almighty God our heavenly Father, you declare your glory and show forth your handiwork in the heavens and in the earth: deliver us in our various occupations from the service of self alone, that we may do the work you give us to do in truth and beauty and for the common good; for the sake of him who came among us as one who serves, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

“For Vocation in Daily Work”

from the *Book of Common Prayer*, the prayer book of the Anglican Communion, originally published in 1549.

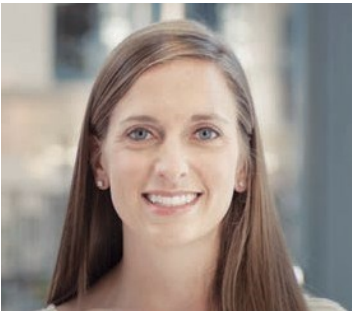
Speaker Biographies

Presenters



MARK MAYHEW

Mark Mayhew is the co-creator of ReFrame, faculty associate at Regent College, and former director of the Regent College Marketplace Institute. Mark is passionate about helping people integrate Christian faith with the whole of life. Prior to graduate theological training, his background was in business consulting, where he worked across multiple industry sectors.



ERIN ANTOSH

Erin Antosh is Director of Programs and Development at the Washington Institute for Faith, Vocation, and Culture. She loves knowing that God is involved in, and deeply cares about, all aspects of our lives. Erin moved to Washington, D.C. in 2006 to participate in the Falls Church Fellows Program and has since worked in national politics in policy, communications, and fundraising positions.

Speakers



PAUL WILLIAMS | Sessions 1, 8, & 9

Paul Williams is Executive Director of the Marketplace Institute and the David J. Brown Family Associate Professor of Marketplace, Theology, and Leadership at Regent College. He previously served as Chief Economist and the Head of International Research for an international real estate consulting and investment banking group based in London, England. His research and writing has focused on the relationship of Christian faith to contemporary economic life.



SARAH WILLIAMS | Session 2

Sarah Williams is Associate Professor of the History of Christianity at Regent College. She is a specialist in modern British social and cultural history and previously taught at the University of Oxford. She is the author of *Religious Belief and Popular Culture* and co-author of *Redefining Christian Britain*.



IAIAN PROVAN | Session 3

Iain Provan is the Marshall Sheppard Professor of Biblical Studies at Regent College and is also an ordained minister of the Church of Scotland. One of the world's experts on Israelite history, he previously taught at London and Edinburgh universities. He has recently published two books: *Convenient Myths* and *Seriously Dangerous Religion*.



PHIL LONG | Session 4

Phil Long is Professor of Old Testament at Regent College. Prior to Regent, he taught for fifteen years at Covenant Theological Seminary in Missouri and four years at the Freie Theologische Akademie in Germany. He has published several books on biblical history, including the co-authored work *A Biblical History of Israel* and a commentary on 1 and 2 Samuel in the *ESV Study Bible*.



RIKK WATTS | Sessions 5 & 6

Rikk Watts is Professor of New Testament at Regent College. He was trained as an aeronautical engineer and worked for IBM while undertaking a degree in philosophy, art history, and sociology. Rikk is an expert on the relationship of the Old and New Testaments and heads the “Mark” section of the Society of Biblical Literature. He is the author of *Isaiah’s New Exodus in Mark*.



BRUCE HINDMARSH | Session 7

Bruce Hindmarsh is the James M. Houston Professor of Spiritual Theology at Regent College and an expert on the history of evangelical piety. He is the author of *John Newton and the English Evangelical Tradition* and *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative*. In 2012, he was elected President of the American Society of Church History – the first time a non-American was awarded this post.



POLLY LONG | Session 10

Polly Long is a sessional lecturer at Regent College. She teaches Greek and has led numerous seminars on homiletics and studying the Bible. Polly has initiated evangelistic outreaches to women in the US, Germany, England, and Canada, and was involved at the founding level of a ministry to women who have been sexually exploited through prostitution in Vancouver, British Columbia.

