



**FLOURISHING**  
LIFE JOURNEY

*Flourishing*  
**WORSHIP**

Finding a place to  
surrender your  
heart to God

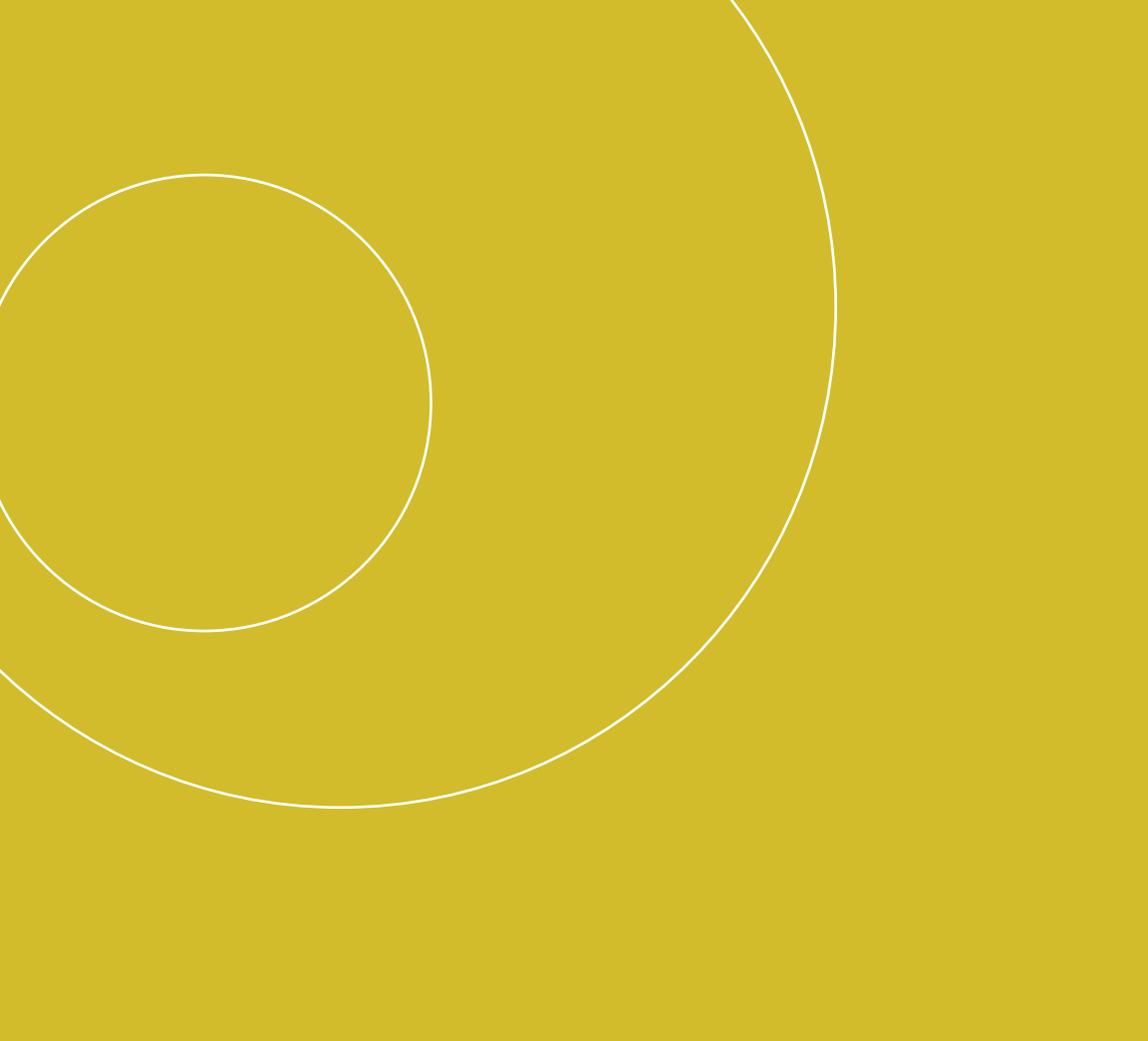
**ROGER PATTERSON  
& BRETT EASTMAN**

*Flourishing*  
**WORSHIP**

**ROGER PATTERSON & BRETT EASTMAN**



**FLOURISHING**  
LIFE JOURNEY



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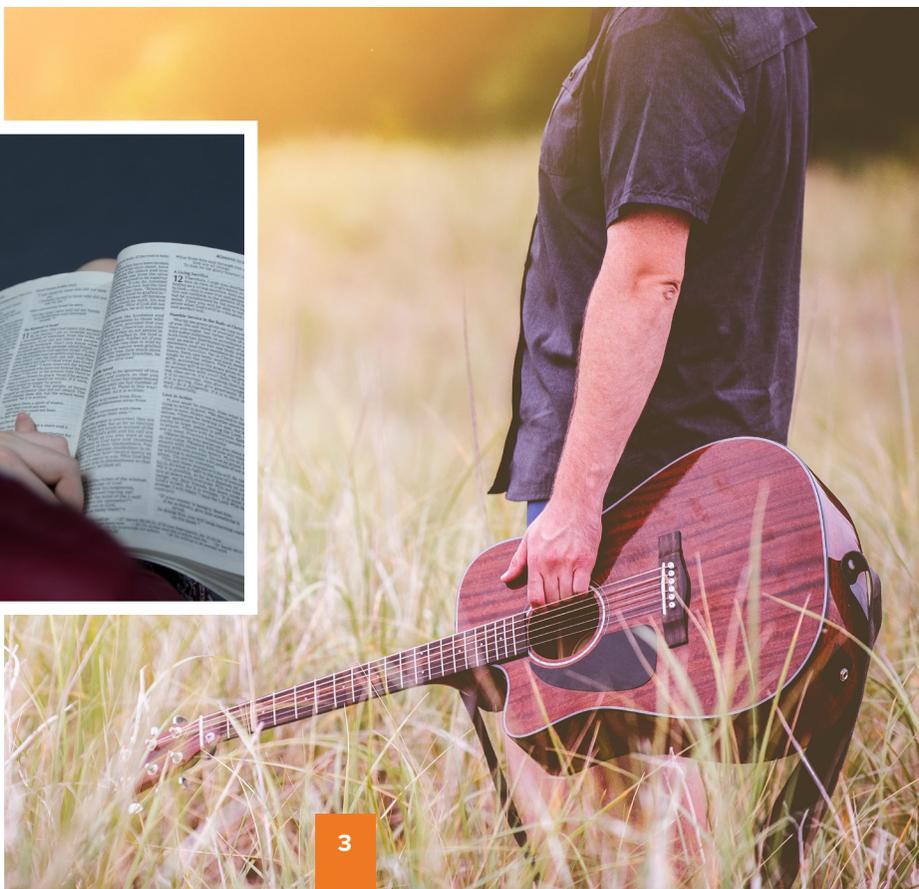
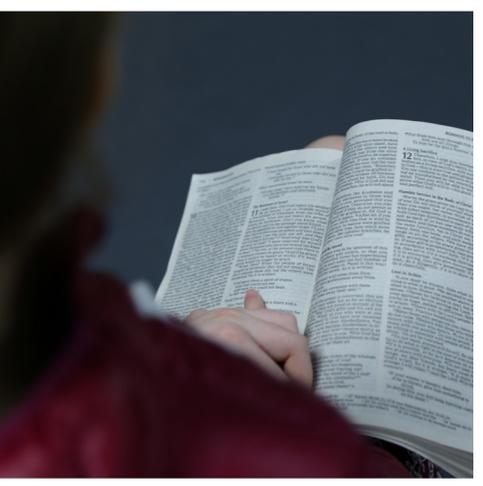
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*welcome*



God has designed us to flourish in the world He created. Worship is important because at the deepest levels, it connects us to God and each other and is how we flourish as God's people. The act of worship means to place value in something being honored. So for Christians, the worship experience is about lifting up the Lord, declaring His value, and placing our lives under His Lordship and leadership.

This study explores the broader meaning of worship: what it is, how and why we worship, how to prepare for worship, and God's role in the worship experience.

As Christ's followers, it's exciting to understand that we were made to worship, need to worship, and find our true purpose in worship. I look forward to joining you on this four-week journey as we learn about worship together!

## **ROGER PATTERSON**

SENIOR PASTOR, CITYRISE

# using

THIS WORKBOOK



- 
- 1. Use the resources.** Become familiar with the first four sections of this study: (1) Contents, (2) Sessions, (3) Appendix, and (4) Small Group Leaders. Each section contains helpful resources to help you effectively lead your small group.
  - 2. Learn from others.** If you are facilitating or co-leading a small group, the Small Group Leaders section offers some hard-learned experiences of others to encourage and help you avoid common obstacles to leading effective small groups.
  - 3. Guide rather than prescribe.** Use this workbook to guide (rather than prescribe or limit) your discussion. If group members respond to the lesson in an unexpected yet honest way, go with that. If you or other participants think of additional (or even better) questions for discussion, go ahead and ask! Take to heart the insights included in the Frequently Asked Questions pages and the Small Group Leaders section.
  - 4. Pray before each session.** Remember to pray for your group members, your time together, and for God's wisdom and insights.
  - 5. Understand the bigger picture.** Before you prepare Session 1, take some time to review the entire study. Knowing what's ahead in all four sections will help you and your group members stay focused on the overall outcome.
  - 6. Most of all, enjoy your small group experience!**

# outline

## OF EACH SESSION

A typical group session for the Flourishing Worship study will include the following sections. Read through this to get a clear idea of how each group meeting will be structured.

**WEEKLY MEMORY VERSES.** Each session opens with a memory verse that emphasizes an important truth from the session. This is an optional exercise, but we believe that memorizing Scripture can be a vital part of filling our minds with God's will for our lives. We encourage you to give this important habit a try. The verses for our four sessions are also listed in the Appendix.

**INTRODUCTION.** Each lesson opens with a brief thought that will help you prepare for the session and get you thinking about the particular subject you will explore with your group. Make it a practice to read these before the session. You may want to have the group read this section aloud.

**SHARE YOUR STORY.** The foundation for spiritual growth is an intimate connection with God and His family. You build that connection by sharing your story with a few people who really know you and who earn your trust. This section includes some simple questions to get you talking—letting you share as much or as little of your story as you feel comfortable doing. They provide a warm up to deeper discussion.

**HEAR GOD'S STORY.** In this section, you'll read the Bible and listen to teaching, in order to hear God's story—and begin to see how His story aligns with yours. When the study directs you to, you'll put in the DVD or stream the video and watch a short teaching segment. You'll then

have an opportunity to read a passage of Scripture, and discuss both the teaching and the text. You won't focus on accumulating information but on how you should live in light of the Word of God. We want to help you apply the insights from Scripture practically and creatively, from your heart as well as from your head. At the end of the day, allowing the timeless truths from God's Word to transform your life in Christ should be your greatest aim.

**CREATE A NEW STORY.** God wants you to be a part of His Kingdom—to weave your story into His. That will mean change. It will require you to go His way rather than your own. This won't happen overnight, but it should happen steadily. By making small, simple choices, we can begin to change our direction. This is where the Bible's instructions to “be doers of the Word, not just hearers” (James 1:22) comes into play. Many people skip over this aspect of the Christian life because it's scary, relationally awkward, or simply too much work for their busy schedules. But Jesus wanted all of His disciples to know Him personally, carry out His commands, and help outsiders connect with Him. This doesn't necessarily mean preaching on street corners. It could mean welcoming newcomers, hosting a short-term group in your home, or walking through this study with a friend. In this study, you'll have an opportunity to go beyond Bible study to biblical living. This section will also have a question or two that will challenge you to live out your faith by serving others, sharing your faith, and worshiping God.

**DAILY DEVOTIONS.** Each week on the Daily Devotions pages we provide Scriptures to read and reflect on between sessions. This provides you with a chance to slow down, read a Bible passage each day, and reflect and pray through it. You'll then have a chance to journal a short response about what you've read. Use this section to seek God on your own throughout the week. This time at home should begin and end with prayer. Don't get in a hurry; take enough time to hear God's direction.

SESSION ONE

# What is Worship?



*“Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in  
the splendor of his holiness.”*

**PSALM 29:2**

We've all heard the term, "hero worship," which means to admire, idealize or venerate someone. Can you name a past or present hero you believe is truly worthy of worship?

The word used for worship in the Old Testament means "complete submission of will and body before someone or something." What level of weight, importance, significance and reverence do we place on worshipping God?

At times, understanding worship can seem cloudy – while at other times, crystal clear. In this study, we'll set out to answer several important questions: What is worship? Is there a "proper" way to worship that helps us to flourish as Christians? Where is God during worship? And how can I improve my worship experience so that I can flourish in the way God has made me to?





# Leader notes

If your group is new, welcome newcomers. Introduce everyone—you may even want to have name tags for your first meeting.

- Open your group with a brief prayer asking for insight as you study. You can pray for specific requests at the end of the meeting, or stop momentarily to pray if a particular situation comes up during your discussion.

# Share

## YOUR STORY

Begin your time together by using the following questions to get the conversation started.

- Take a few minutes for each person to share their spiritual story. Do you have a religious background? If yes, what comes to mind when you think about previous worship experiences? If not, what does the word “worship” mean to you in general?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how familiar are you with the concept of worship? What goal number would you like to reach by the end of our study?
- What are you hoping to get out of this group?
- Can you think of someone who might enjoy attending this study with you? Invite them to join you next week. Use the Circles of Life diagram on page 75 to brainstorm a few names to grow your group.

# watch

## THE VIDEO

Use the space provided below to record key thoughts, questions, and things you want to remember or follow up on. After watching the video, have someone read the discussion questions in the Hear God's Story section and direct the discussion among the group.

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# hear

GOD'S STORY





### **Read John 4:21-24**

*“Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”*

### **Read John 4:28-29**

*“Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?”*

- The conversation between Jesus and the woman at the well changed her life, as well as the lives of many others. How did Jesus “flip” the familiar notion that worship would no longer be about location, but rather about “the Spirit and in truth?”
- Jesus said it twice: “Worship in the Spirit and in truth.” What did He mean by this? The last time you worshiped, did you worship in the Spirit and in truth?
- Have you ever had a life-changing personal encounter with Jesus during worship, like the woman at the well? Explain.

# create

## A NEW STORY

In this section, talk about how you will apply the wisdom you've learned from the teaching. Then think about practical steps you can take in the coming week to live out what you've learned.

- God's holy presence, when we recognize it, takes our breath away. What actions can you take to infuse more glory, awe and reverence, and flourishing into your own worship experience?
- The passage we read challenges us to worship God "in the Spirit and in truth." What new, positive truths about yourself can you put into practice to improve your walk with Christ?
- Synonyms for worship include love, respect, revere, celebrate and honor. How can you love your friends and family in a way that honors God and expresses a worshipful heart?

Give each person an opportunity to share prayer requests. If you'd like, you can write these on the Prayer & Praise Report on page 78.

Close your meeting with prayer.



# daily

## DEVOTIONS

### Day 1

#### **Psalm 29:2**

*“Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of His holiness.”*

#### **Reflect:**

How can you consciously use your words, actions and deeds to “ascribe” – or declare – all the good things God has done in your life? If you’ve experienced God’s grace in a new way that causes you to flourish, how will you “pay it forward” today?

### Day 2

#### **John 4:24**

*“God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”*

#### **Reflect:**

Worship happens when we encounter God, spirit to spirit, in an atmosphere of truth – truth about Him and truth about ourselves. What truth has God revealed to you during worship through prayer, music, sermons, and service?

### Day 3

#### **2 Chronicles 5:13**

*“Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, the singers raised their voices in praise to the Lord and sang: “He is good; His love endures forever.”*

#### **Reflect:**

How does music and singing help you worship God? What song comes to mind that reinforces God’s goodness and enduring love for you? Take a few minutes to sing along to your favorite worship song; and consider how worshiping God in this way causes you to flourish every day.

Use these daily devotions to go deeper into this week's topic. On the first day, you may want to read over all the verses for the week to get the "big picture" of the passage. Each day, read the verse given. Take your time. Ask God to speak to you through His word. Notice which word or phrase stands out to you. Then take some time to journal your response back to him. Listen to what God wants to say to you through His word, and respond to Him as you reflect on the truths of Scripture. Consider what action you will take as a result of your study so that you can become a more flourishing worshiper.

## Day 4

### **Matthew 18:20**

*"For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."*

#### **Reflect:**

As followers of Jesus, we cannot flourish if we do not pray. Prayer is a form of worship we express individually, in pairs or groups. Share a time when you worshiped God while praying with another person or in a group. How did God answer your prayer?

## Day 5

### **John 4:26**

*"Then Jesus declared, 'I, the one speaking to you – I am He.'"*

#### **Reflect:**

The woman at the well was not flourishing as she waited for the Messiah to come and make sense of her life. The Samaritans did not know God, but when Jesus revealed Himself, it changed everything. How has worshipping Jesus changed things for you and caused you to flourish in your life?

## Day 6

### **Matthew 2:11**

*"On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasures and presented Him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh."*

#### **Reflect:**

What gifts can you offer as a way to thank God for the goodness He has shown to you and for where He has caused you to flourish in your life?

## SESSION TWO

# How & Why do we Worship?



*“Peter said to Jesus, ‘Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters – one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.’”*

**Matthew 17:4**

We are all different, with diverse tastes and interests. Therefore, the way we process a worship experience may differ profoundly from individual to individual. Put two people together in an ornately restored cathedral. One will flourish as she sees God's unmistakable hand guiding history, while the other is quite certain God left the building five centuries ago.

It is always helpful to discuss our diverse views about worship. It's also valuable to exchange ideas about how we worship. Yet what matters most is to understand the reasons why we worship. This week, we'll unpack why Christ's followers were made to worship, need to worship, and find their true purpose and flourishing in worship.

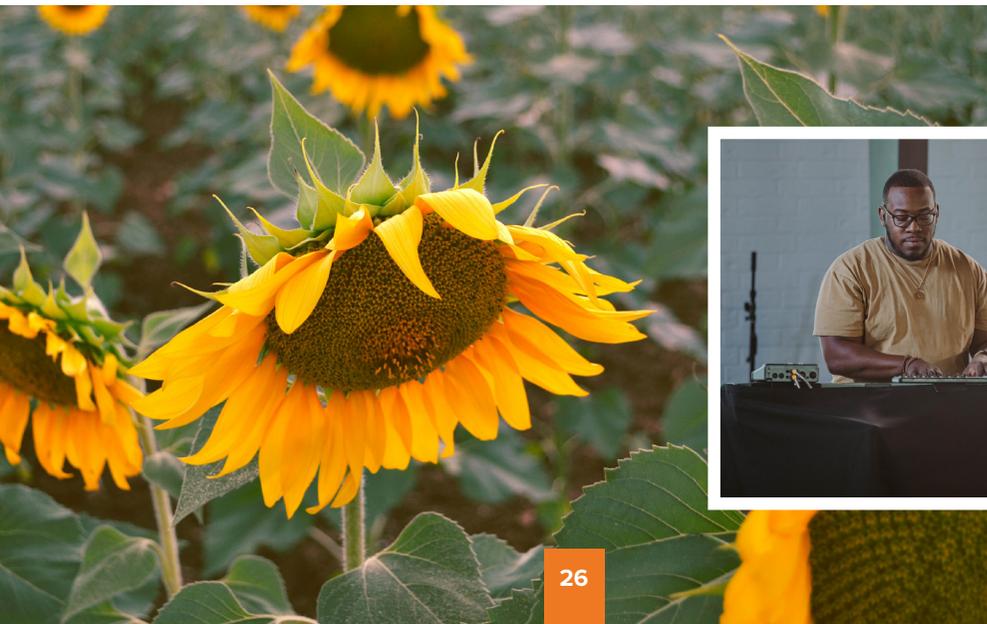


# Share

## YOUR STORY

Begin your time together by using the following questions to get the conversation started.

- How did your Daily Devotions go last week? Were you able to understand worship in a new or different way?
- What situations, circumstances or conditions “draw” you into worship?
- Have you ever experienced God’s presence so powerfully that you wanted to hold onto the experience forever? What did you discover?





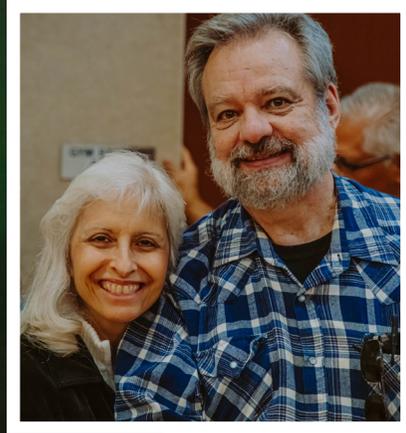




# hear

GOD'S STORY





## Read Matthew 17:1-8

*“After six days Jesus took with Him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. Peter said to Jesus, ‘Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters – one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.’ While He was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him!’ When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them. ‘Get up,’ He said. ‘Don’t be afraid.’ When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.”*

# create

## A NEW STORY



In this section, talk about how you will apply the wisdom you've learned from the teaching and Bible study. Then think about practical steps you can take to flourish in the coming week by living out what you've learned.

- Describe the ways you worship God best, i.e. through prayer, music, Scripture reading, the sacraments, service to others, etc. Which expressions require greater effort, practice or attention? What can you do to build your “worship muscles” in these areas so you can flourish in your life with Christ?
- If you've worshiped in another city, state or country, share how that experience opened your eyes to new ways of worship.
- Share something new you learned about worship that you didn't know before.

Give each person an opportunity to share prayer requests. If you'd like, you can write these on the Prayer & Praise Report on page 78.

Close your meeting with prayer.



# daily

## DEVOTIONS

### Day 1

#### **Psalm 92:1**

*"It is good to praise the Lord and make music to your name, O Most High."*

#### **Reflect:**

Science has proven that music is good for the flourishing of the soul, and music therapy can help sick patients get better. Play one of your favorite worship songs and jot down a few notes about how the music helps you connect to God.

### Day 2

#### **Mark 12:30-31**

*"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this:*

*'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."*

#### **Reflect:**

How is loving or serving your neighbor an act of worship?

### Day 3

#### **Isaiah 26:3**

*"You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you."*

#### **Reflect:**

Why is focusing on God a powerful antidote to worry? How can you meditate on God's Word to improve your worship and flourish in your life? Find a familiar place to post your memory verse for daily viewing: Tape to the bathroom mirror, pin on a bulletin board, slip into your pocket, or clip on your car visor.

Use these daily devotions to go deeper into this week's topic. On the first day, you may want to read over all the verses for the week to get the "big picture" of the passage. Each day, read the verse given. Take your time. Ask God to speak to you through His word. Notice which word or phrase stands out to you. Then take some time to journal your response back to him. Listen to what God wants to say to you through His word, and respond to Him as you reflect on the truths of Scripture. Consider what action you will take as a result of your study so that you may learn to flourish in the way He has created you to.

## Day 4

### **Hebrews 12:28**

*"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe."*

#### **Reflect:**

List four ways this passage guides you to frame your flourishing worship mindset.

## Day 5

### **Matthew 7:12**

*"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."*

#### **Reflect:**

How can you improve your worship mindset by following the Golden Rule at home, school, work, church –in fact, everywhere?

## Day 6

### **Isaiah 55:12**

*"You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands."*

#### **Reflect:**

This passage paints a metaphorical picture of God's vibrant creation praising Him in worship. How does spending time in nature, gardening, honoring the seasons, and taking care of the environment help you create a more worshipful heart?

## SESSION THREE

# Before Worship



*"I rejoiced with those who said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord.'"*

**PSALM 122:1**

If you've ever played sports or trained for a big event, you know that preparation is critical to rise to the top of your game and flourish in your sport. Proper training, rest and nutrition are key elements of a successful training regimen. Preparing for worship is the same. It requires an intentional mindset where we "set our minds on things above, not on earthly things" (Colossians 3:2).

Worship doesn't begin when we take our seats in the auditorium or the worship band plays the first chord. Rather, worship begins long before, with minds "alert and fully sober, setting your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming" (1 Peter 1:13).

In this session we will discuss how to prepare for worship in a way that leads to greater flourishing in love, praise, thankfulness to the One who first loved us (1 John 1:9).



# Share

## YOUR STORY

Begin your time together by using the following questions to get the conversation started.

- Which of last week's Daily Devotions was particularly meaningful or encouraging to you? Explain.
- Compare and contrast individual (personal) and corporate (group) worship. How are they similar? Different? What are the benefits of each and how does engaging in both together help you to flourish in your life?
- What personal habits or spiritual disciplines do you follow to help you prepare for a flourishing worship experience?
- Do you believe that worshiping God is done better together? Explain.



# watch

## THE VIDEO

Use the space provided below to record your thoughts and questions as well as the things you want to remember or follow up on. After watching the video, have someone read the discussion questions in the Hear God's Story section and start the conversation.

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# hear

GOD'S STORY



## Read Exodus 20:2-11

1. *“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me.”*

2. *“You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.”*

3. *“You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.”*

4. *“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”*

- In the first four Ten Commandments we just read, which words or phrases make it clear that God desires our worship?
- What are the consequences of not following God’s direction? Where will we fail to flourish if we disobey?
- What does it mean to “remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy?”
- How do you honor the Sabbath so that you can flourish the rest of the week?

# create

## A NEW STORY

In this section, talk about how you will apply the wisdom you've learned from the teaching and Bible study. Then think about practical steps you can take in the coming week to live out what you've learned and to flourish according to God's Word.

- Each commandment challenges us to worship the true God, not substitute gods. Name some substitute gods, or idols, we use to replace God. What is the outcome if we dishonor God?
- Name some ways we can treat God's name and character with honor and respect. Share about a time you enjoyed "restful gratitude time." What did you do, and how did you flourish as a result?
- How can your small community worship together and serve the larger community? What project could your group do together that would help others flourish?

Give each person an opportunity to share prayer requests. If you'd like, you can write these on the Prayer & Praise Report on page 78.

Close your meeting with prayer.



# daily

## DEVOTIONS

### Day 1

#### **Exodus 20:11**

*"For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but He rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."*

#### **Reflect:**

What does your typical Sabbath day look like? How can you make your Sabbath more peaceful and restful?

### Day 2

#### **Psalm 100:4**

*"Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name."*

#### **Reflect:**

What steps can you take to prepare your heart for worship well before you enter the church "gates?"

### Day 3

#### **Psalm 122:1**

*"I rejoiced with those who said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord.'"*

#### **Reflect:**

What plans can you make this week to meet a few others in your group for worship? Use the Circles of Life diagram on page 75 to brainstorm a few friends' names to invite to church.

Use these daily devotions to go deeper into this week's topic. On the first day, you may want to read over all the verses for the week to get the "big picture" of the passage. Each day, read the verse given. Take your time. Ask God to speak to you through His Word. Notice which word or phrase stands out to you. Then take some time to journal your response back to Him. Listen to what God wants to say to you through His Word, and respond to Him as you reflect on the truths of Scripture. Consider what action you will take as a result of your study so that you may learn to flourish in the way He has created you to.

## Day 4

### **Psalm 19:1**

*"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."*

#### **Reflect:**

Can you remember a time when you saw "the heavens declare the glory of God," and "the skies proclaim the work of his hands?" What did you observe in creation, and how did that experience lead you to worship God?

## Day 5

### **Psalm 23:1**

*"The Lord is my shepherd, lack nothing."*

#### **Reflect:**

The analogy of a sheep following the points to a genuine, trusting relationship with God who causes us to flourish. What does He promise when we place our worship and trust in Him?

## Day 6

### **Hebrews 10:22**

*"Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water."*

#### **Reflect:**

Confessing our sins is an act of worship that allows us to bring our guilty consciences to God so He can cleanse us with "pure water," and put us back on the road to flourishing. What benefits do we receive by confessing our sins to God?

SESSION FOUR

God's  
Response to  
Worship



*"Come near to God and He will come near to you."*

**JAMES 4:8**

Think about someone you know who is 100 percent reliable. You can always count on that person to do what he or she promised to do. What a good friend! God is the same way. He is completely worthy of our trust, and promises to meet us whenever we call.

Throughout history, God “shows up” to faithfully deliver His people back to flourishing: David hiding in sin, the Israelites wandering in the wilderness, Paul and Silas in prison, Jesus’ rag-tag band of disciples – and so many more.

Today, two thousand years later, God is still “showing up” to lead His people during worship. His omnipresence means He is actively aware of every part of His creation. His manifest presence is displayed on occasions when He interrupts human events or enters a place where His people are worshipping – and inserts a powerful jolt of His glory and power.

As this study comes to a close, let’s give thanks to God for every good gift – including the gift of worship! We have discovered together that the things God asks of us are not because He needs anything, but rather because He really knows what we need and wants us to flourish. Whether we express our gratitude through songs, music, Scripture, prayer, the sacraments, service, or other offerings, we know one thing for sure: Christ’s followers were made to worship, need to worship, and find our true purpose and flourishing in worship.

Meeting God in worship is exciting and fulfilling. Now let’s discuss how worship happens in this final session of our study.

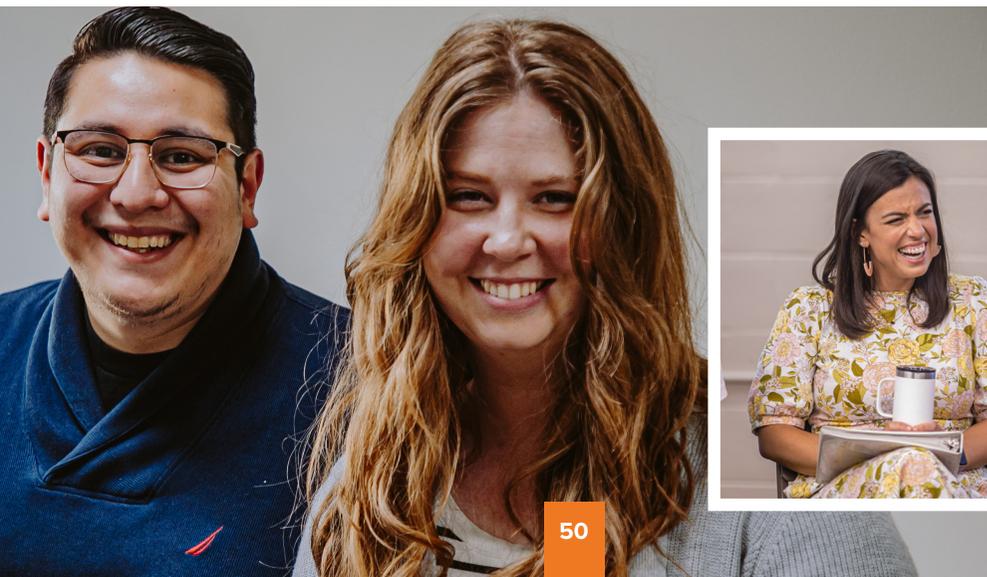


# Share

## YOUR STORY

Begin your time together by using the following questions to get the conversation started.

- Which of last week's Daily Devotions was particularly meaningful to you? Explain.
- Tell about a time when you felt compelled to say, "God is really here!" (1 Corinthians 14:24). What were the circumstances?
- How has your understanding of worship expanded over the past four weeks? What was your greatest "ah-ha" moment? Explain.





# watch

## THE VIDEO

Use the space provided below to record your thoughts and questions as well as the things you want to remember or follow up on. After watching the video, have someone read the discussion questions in the Hear God's Story section and start the conversation.

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# hear

GOD'S STORY





### **Read Psalm 139:1-3**

*“You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.”*

### **Read Psalm 139:23-34**

*“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”*

Read the entire Psalm 139 if you have time. List the all the verbs such as know, perceive, discern, hem, guide, hold, slay and lead. Who is assuming most of the action in this passage – David or God?

- David acknowledges God’s omnipresence. Share a time when you felt God’s unmistakable presence in your life.
- According to the passage, is there any place God cannot go?
- What does David know for sure about God? What do you know to be true about God’s hand in your life?

# create

## A NEW STORY

In this section, talk about how you will apply the wisdom you've learned from the teaching and Bible study. Then think about practical steps you can take in the coming week to live out what you've learned.

- We were made for worship, need to worship, and find our true purpose in worship. How has this study encouraged you to worship God “in Spirit and in truth?” Which aspects of your worship life can you make some tweaks?
- How has God changed you through worship and caused you to begin to flourish spiritually? What steps can you take to share this “good news” with unbelievers?
- Which prayer(s) are you asking God to answer? How can you invite others to support you in prayerful worship?

Take some time as a group to affirm the spiritual gifts you and others bring to the worship experience at church, home, work and in our communities. This can include roles like prayer warrior, musician or singer, Scripture reader, teacher, pastor, leader, connector, helper, community servant – and much more. How can your spiritual gifts help you and others to flourish in worship.

Give each person an opportunity to share prayer requests. If you'd like, you can write these on the Prayer & Praise Report on page 78.

Close your meeting with prayer.



# daily

## DEVOTIONS

### Day 1

#### **Psalm 139:5-6**

*“You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.”*

#### **Reflect:**

How does it feel to know that God’s almighty hand is guiding you? Are you overwhelmed with gratitude like David was? Do you feel that His hand is causing you to flourish in your life as His follower?

### Day 2

#### **1 John 5:14**

*“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”*

#### **Reflect:**

Do you need more confidence to approach God and ask for what you need? How has He heard and answered your prayers and requests in the past?

### Day 3

#### **Romans 8:38-39**

*“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

#### **Reflect:**

Can anything separate us from God? Is there anywhere He cannot go?

Use these daily devotions to go deeper into this week's topic. On the first day, you may want to read over all the verses for the week to get the "big picture" of the passage. Each day, read the verse given. Take your time. Ask God to speak to you through His word. Notice which word or phrase stands out to you. Then take some time to journal your response back to him. Listen to what God wants to say to you through His word, and respond to Him as you reflect on the truths of Scripture. Consider what action you will take as a result of your study.

## Day 4

### **Psalm 96:4**

*"For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; He is to be feared above all gods."*

#### **Reflect:**

Why is God worthy of our praise? What does it mean to "fear" Him? How does fearing Him cause us to flourish?

## Day 5

### **Revelation 19:1**

*"Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: 'Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns.'"*

#### **Reflect:**

In his renowned musical work, "Messiah," George Frideric Handel put these words to music: "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns." How has Handel's music impacted your worship experience?

## Day 6

### **James 1:17**

*"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."*

#### **Reflect:**

God's character is omnipotent, omniscient and unchanging. His stature in "the heavenly lights" underscores his immutability. Unlike shifting shadows, God never changes. How does this verse give you hope and confidence as you face trials?





# Appendices



# frequently

## ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What do we do on the first night of our group?**

Like all fun things in life, have a party! A “get to know you” coffee, dinner or dessert is a great way to launch a new study. You may want to review the Group Agreement on page 64 and share the names of a few friends you can invite to join. Most importantly, have fun before your study time begins.

### **Can we do this study on our own?**

Absolutely! This may sound crazy, but one of the best ways to do this study is not with a full house but with a few friends. You may choose to gather with another couple or a few friends going out to dinner, and then walk through this study together.

### **What if this group is not working for me?**

You’re not alone! This could be the result of a personality conflict, life stage difference, geographical distance, level of spiritual maturity, or any number of things. Relax. Pray for God’s direction, and at the end of the study, decide whether to continue with this group or find another. However, don’t bail out before the four weeks are up; God might have something to teach you. And don’t run from conflict or prejudge people before you have given them a chance. God is still working in your life, too!

### **Who is the leader?**

Most groups have an official leader. Ideally however, the group will mature and members will rotate the leadership of meetings. We have discovered that healthy groups rotate hosts/leaders and homes on a regular basis. This model ensures that all members grow, give their unique contribution, and develop their gifts. This study guide and the

Holy Spirit can keep things on track even when you rotate leaders. Christ has promised to be in your midst as you gather. Ultimately, God is your leader each step of the way.

**How do we handle the childcare needs in our group?**

Very carefully. Seriously, this can be a sensitive issue. We suggest that you empower the group to openly brainstorm solutions. You may try one option that works for a while and then adjust over time. Our favorite approach is for adults to meet in the living room or dining room and to share the cost of a babysitter (or two) who can watch the kids in a different part of the house. This way, parents don't have to be away from their children all evening when their children are too young to be left at home. A second option is to use one home for the kids and a second home (close by or a phone call away) for the adults. A third idea is to rotate the responsibility of providing a lesson or care for the children either in the same home or in another home nearby. This can be an incredible blessing for kids. Finally, the most common solution is to decide that you need to have a night to invest in your spiritual lives individually or as a couple, and to make your own arrangements for childcare. No matter what decision the group makes, the best approach is to dialogue openly about both the problem and the solution.





# small

## GROUP AGREEMENT

### OUR PURPOSE

To provide an environment where participants experience authentic community and spiritual growth.

### OUR VALUES

#### **Group Attendance**

To give priority to the group meeting. We will call or email if we will be late or absent. (Completing the Group Calendar on page 66 will minimize this issue.)

#### **Safe Environment**

To create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved. (Please, no quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes.)

#### **Respect Differences**

To be gentle and gracious to fellow group members with different spiritual maturity, personal opinions, temperaments, or “imperfections.” We are all works in progress.

#### **Confidentiality**

To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group, and to avoid sharing improper information about those outside the group.

#### **Encouragement for Growth**

To be not just takers but givers of life. We want to spiritually multiply our life by serving others with our God-given gifts.

**Shared Ownership**

To remember that every member is a minister and to ensure that each attender will share a small team role or responsibility over time.

**Rotating Hosts/Leaders and Homes**

To encourage different people to host the group in their homes and to rotate the responsibility of facilitating each meeting. (See the Group Calendar on page 66.)

**OUR REMINDERS**

- Refreshments/mealtimes .....
  - Childcare .....
  - When we will meet (day of week) .....
  - Where we will meet (place) .....
  - We will begin at (time) ..... and end at .....
  - We will do our best to have some or all of us attend a worship service together.
  - Our primary worship service time will be .....
  - Date of this agreement .....
  - Date we will review this agreement again .....
  - Who (other than the leader) will review this agreement?
- .....



# spiritual

## PARTNER CHECK-IN

Briefly check in each week and write down your personal plans and progress targets for the next week (or even for the next few weeks). This could be done before or after the meeting, on the phone, through an e-mail message, or even in person from time to time.

- **My Name:**.....
- **Spiritual Partner's Name:**.....



<b>OUR PLANS</b>	<b>OUR PROGRESS</b>
<b>SESSION 1</b>	
<b>SESSION 2</b>	
<b>SESSION 3</b>	
<b>SESSION 4</b>	

**CUT & REVIEW  
THE MEMORY VERSES  
ON THE OTHER SIDE  
OF THIS PAGE.**

*cut*

## One

*“Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of His holiness.”*

**PSALM 29:2**

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## Two

*“Peter said to Jesus, ‘Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters – one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.’”*

**MATTHEW 17:4**

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## Three

*“I rejoiced with those who said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the Lord.’”*

**PSALM 122:1**

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## Four

*“Come near to God and He will come near to you.”*

**JAMES 4:8**







# Small Group Leaders

# hosting

## AN OPEN HOUSE

Even if you have only two to four core members, it's a great way to break the ice and to consider prayerfully who else might be open to joining you over the next few weeks. You can also use this kick-off meeting to hand out study guides, spend some time getting to know each other, discuss each person's expectations for the group and briefly pray for each other. A simple meal or good dessert always make a kick-off meeting more fun.

After people introduce themselves, have everyone respond to a few icebreaker questions:

- What is your favorite family vacation?
- What is one thing you love about your church/our community?
- What are three things about your life growing up that most people here don't know?



Next, ask everyone to tell what he or she hopes to get out of the study. You might want to review the Small Group Agreement and talk about each person's expectations and priorities.

Finally, set an open chair (maybe two) in the center of your group and explain that it represents someone who would enjoy or benefit from this group but who isn't here yet. Ask people to pray about inviting someone to join the group over the next few weeks. Hand out postcards and have everyone write an invitation or two. Don't worry about ending up with too many people; you can always have one discussion circle in the living room and another in the dining room after you watch the lesson. Each group could then report prayer requests and progress at the end of the session.

You can skip this kick-off meeting if your time is limited, but you'll experience a huge benefit if you take the time to connect with each other in this way.

**FAMILIAR**  
(Neighbors, Kids' Friends)

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**FAMILY**  
(Immediate or Extended)

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**FRIENDS**

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**FUN**  
(Gym, Hobbies, Hangouts)

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**WORK**

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# Leading

FOR THE  
FIRST TIME

## **Sweaty palms are a healthy sign.**

The Bible says God is gracious to the humble. Remember who is in control. The time to worry is when you're not worried. Those who are soft in heart (and sweaty-palmed) are those whom God is sure to speak through.

## **Seek support.**

Ask your leader, co-leader, or close friend to pray for you and prepare with you before the session. Walking through the study will help you anticipate potentially difficult questions and discussion topics.

## **Bring your uniqueness to the study.**

Lean into who you are and how God wants you to uniquely lead the study.

## **Prepare. Review the session material.**

If you are using the DVD, listen to the teaching segment. Make sure you set aside ample time to prepare.

## **Be time conscious.**

Everyone leads busy lives. One of the greatest ways you can value people is by placing value on their time. Therefore, you will want to be certain you are beginning on time and concluding on time. Be aware of the clock throughout the group session.

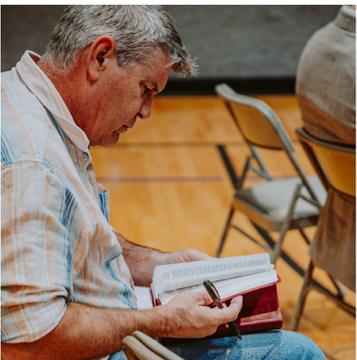
## **Ask for feedback so you can grow.**

Perhaps in an email or on cards handed out at the study, have everyone

write down three things you did well and one thing you could improve on. Demonstrate an openness to learn and grow.

**Share with your group what God is doing in your heart.**

God is searching for those whose hearts are fully His. Share your trials and victories. We promise that people will relate.



# prayer

## & PRAISE REPORT

	PRAYER REQUEST	PRAISE REPORT
SESSION 1		
SESSION 2		
SESSION 3		
SESSION 4		







# Flourishing WORSHIP

**Worship is important because at the deepest level, it connects us to God and each other.**

The act of worship means to place value in something being honored. So for Christians, the worship experience is about lifting up the Lord, declaring His value, and placing our lives under His Lordship and leadership. This study explores the broader meaning of worship: what it is, how and why we worship, how to prepare for worship, and God's role in the worship experience.



**ROGER PATTERSON** SENIOR PASTOR, CITYRISE NETWORK

Dr. Roger Patterson is the lead pastor of CityRise, a multi-site congregation of West University Baptist Church, Crosspoint Church Bellaire, and CityRise Missouri City, located in the heart of Houston, Texas. Through CityRise, Roger has created the CityRise Network, a network of churches, ministries, non-profits, and global partners whose vision is to lift the city and world by generously giving the gospel of Jesus Christ. He is a husband to Julee and father to Brady, Cooper and Carson. He is the author of Fight For It, A Minute of Vision for Men, and co-author of Leading from the Second Chair.

**BRETT EASTMAN** FOUNDER, LIFETOGETHER MINISTRIES

In 2006, after serving as the Small Group Champion at Saddleback Church and Willow Creek Community Church, Brett Eastman founded LifeTogether. Brett has produced award-winning resources for over one hundred of the fastest growing and farthest reaching churches today through his publishing partners including Zondervan, Tyndale, Thomas Nelson, and Purpose Driven Ministries, with whom Brett produced the bestselling Purpose Driven Small Group Curriculum. Brett has degrees from San Diego State University, Biola University, Talbot School of Theology and a Management Certificate from Northwestern University in Chicago, IL. Brett is married to Dee, and they have raised five amazing children.



[www.cityrise.org](http://www.cityrise.org)



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