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LOST & FOUND

MOVING FROM SEPARATION TO CELEBRATION

FOLLOW-UP DEVOTIONAL JOURNAL

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO: _____

DATE STARTED: _____

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Lost & Found: Moving from Separation to Celebration

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**“FOR WHOEVER
WOULD SAVE HIS LIFE
WILL LOSE IT, BUT
WHOEVER LOSES HIS
LIFE FOR MY SAKE
*WILL FIND IT.”***

- MATTHEW 16:25

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GETTING *STARTED*

If you're reading this, the chances are that you spent a few days going through *Lost & Found* with your youth group sometime recently. Maybe you did this during a Disciple Now, a retreat, or camp. Wherever you started your journey with *Lost & Found*, this book will help you continue it.

No one likes to be lost. There are few things more frustrating than knowing there's a destination out there for you but not being able to reach it. But when you discover your way, there is a flood of relief. You exhale, knowing that you are safe. You have arrived. You are no longer lost. You're found.

Lost and Found will help you see that we experience separation from God because of our sins. But the fantastic news is that our Father stands ready to extend forgiveness and welcome home the lost. God means for us to be found. It is His great desire. Lost and Found will help you understand this. Once they do, your life will never be the same.

HOW THIS BOOK WORKS

Here are a few things you need to know to put this book to good use.

START WITH THIS ADVICE

Whether you're super-committed and read your Bible each day or struggle to read a few verses a couple of times a week, commitment is the key to sticking with this through four weeks. Your routine may change, but your commitment to meeting God daily has to be there. Tell yourself that whether or not you read this journal at the same time each day or if you read it whenever you get a few extra minutes, you'll make it a priority in your daily life.

HAVE YOUR BIBLE OPEN

Resist the urge to ignore the spots where this book will tell you to read a passage of Scripture. This book is only a guide for what you will discover in the Bible. The close relationship with God you want only happens by reading and doing what's in the Bible. Have it open as you go through this book.

EACH WEEK IS STRUCTURED THE SAME, BUT IS DIFFERENT

Each week's content works in similar ways. But each day is different. And there are a lot of different kinds of activities. Some will take 3-5 minutes, some 10-15. Some will ask you to look at two or three Scripture passages; some will ask you to think about a concept. The variety will make it easier to stick with and help you learn in different ways suited to you.

WHAT IF I MISS A DAY OF READING? OR THREE?

Don't give up! Take this at your pace! The goal is for you to grow closer to God. Don't throw in the towel if you miss a day or two (or four). Pick this book back up and start where you left off. You can do this! And by doing it, you'll show the world that God makes an incredible difference in the lives of His followers. So, hang in there! You've got this!

WELL, THAT'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW TO GET STARTED! TURN THE PAGE TO READ THE INTRODUCTION TO WEEK 1.

INTRO

WEEK ONE

Before you start Week 1, read this short intro.

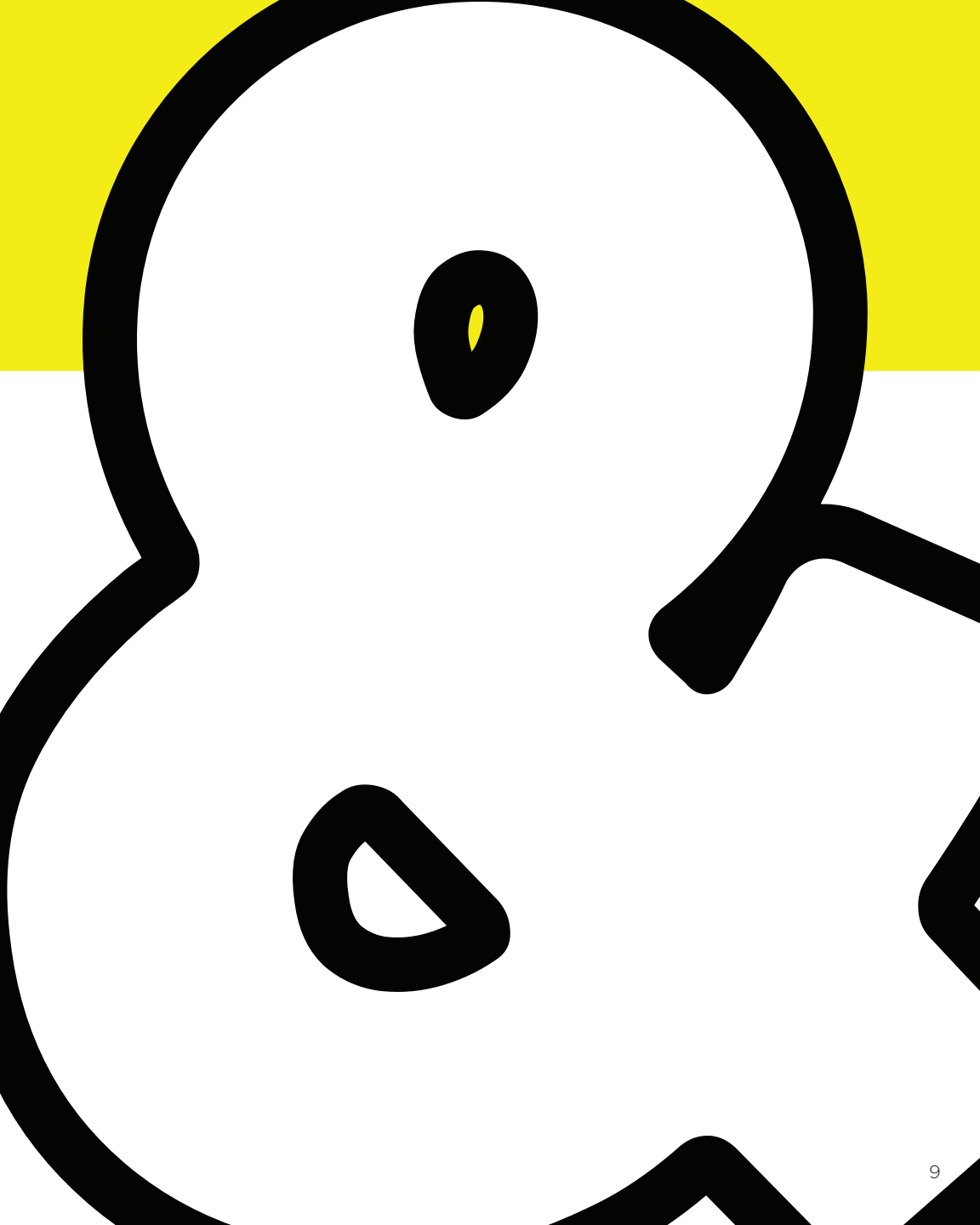
God created us with a relationship in mind. When we look at the Garden of Eden, we see God, Adam, and Eve in what we might call a normal relationship. They walked together. They talked together.

But then, Adam and Eve sinned, and one of the consequences was that their close relationship with God was lost. Sin caused a separation between them and God, and it's caused a separation between God and people ever since.

The good news? God sent Jesus to build a bridge back to Him. Because of Jesus, we can know God and have a close relationship with Him. That's what it means to be lost and then found.

This week will flesh this concept out in a little more detail. It may be somewhat of a review for you, but it's an important way of setting the stage for what you will learn for the rest of this book.

So if you're ready to get started, turn the page.



WEEK 1 DAY 1

Read the devotion below and answer the questions on the following page.

All of us have experienced distance in relationships at some point or another. Typically, it comes right after a big misunderstanding or a flat-out disagreement. You could have borrowed a friend's jacket and spilled soda all over it. Or maybe you and your brother disagreed about who will win a reality TV show, and he is so incredibly wrong that you can't bring yourself to talk to him about anything else for the rest of the day.

The point is that you know what it feels like for distance to come between two people. But the distance between God and humankind is much bigger and brought about through the worst offense: sin. Sadly, sin has been around since virtually the beginning of God's relationship with humanity. Once Adam and Eve (the first humans to exist) sinned against God, the relationship between God and humanity was changed forever.

Read Genesis 3:14-19.

When we talk about sin, we are not only referring to the things we do every day that go against God's design. Sin is also present in your heart the very first moment you come into existence. It is the basic desire that leads you to think of what YOU want and how you can bring YOURSELF honor that should belong to God. You can try to fight sin, but you can't escape it.

When we look at the consequences given to Adam and Eve when they chose to dishonor God's commands, it seems there may never be hope for us to reconnect with God. But take a closer look at the curse that God gives the serpent. **Read Genesis 3:15.**

Super smart folks who study the Bible have a very long and difficult-to-pronounce name for this verse: The Protoevangelium. This big word is trying to tell us that this verse is the first time God promises a coming Savior (a.k.a. Jesus Christ). So even while getting lost, Adam and Eve are given a promise that the Lord would make a way for humanity to be found and restored. Even though we experience pain, suffering, and even death because of sin, there is still hope in Jesus Christ.

Read the following questions. Think about your response or answer them in the space provided.

1. The curses given to Adam and Eve still impact our world today. How have you seen sin impact the world around you?
2. What feelings do you have when you think about having distance between you and a friend? What about between you and God?
3. The theme of this devotional is Lost & Found. Define what it means to be 'lost.' Try to include how it feels to be lost.

WEEK 1 DAY 2

Read the devotional below and journal your thoughts on the next page.

In the letter to the Romans, Paul says,

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:23-24).

In your first devotional this week, we discussed what it means to sin and fall short of God’s glory. But the point of this study is not to stay rooted in the fact that we are “lost.” Instead, we will spend this devotional celebrating how quickly we are “found”!

Take another look at this verse above, and fill in the blanks below with your name.

FOR _____ HAS SINNED AND FALLEN SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD, AND _____ IS JUSTIFIED BY HIS GRACE AS A GIFT THROUGH THE REDEMPTION THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS.

Wow! You could take this one verse and use it to share your own story as a Christ-follower. Yes, you have sinned and were lost. However, despite this, God offered you the gift of Christ Jesus, which can restore your relationship. God has extended an offer of forgiveness to you and is eager to give you a place in His eternal Kingdom.

If you want to, write down your thoughts about this passage on the next page. What does it mean to you that God has offered a way for the lost to be found? Think about this truth as you go about your day.

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WEEK 1 DAY 3

Read the devotional below and work through the questions on the next page.

To begin today's devotional, take a minute to list out five things that you absolutely could not live without. It could be a certain person, an after-school activity, or an item you would be devastated to lose.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Now that you've made your list, consider why these things are important to you. Many of us have people and activities we love because they bring us joy. Or you might have written something above that captures more of who you are, such as your favorite gaming system or a T-shirt you bought while at your favorite band's concert. The great thing about your answer is that anyone could look at your five things and learn more about what makes you who you are.

However, imagine for a moment that these items started getting in the way of your walk with Jesus. For example, you might have put your friend group on your list of things you could not live without. Friends are incredibly important, and those types of relationships can last a lifetime. But what if your friends start to take up more and more of your time? After a while, you may start to notice that your life is structured around your relationship with your friends and not around your relationship with God. Or what if your friends lead you away from the life you know you're called to live as a Christ-follower?

Read Matthew 16:24-26.

What do you think this passage means for your life and relationship with the five things you listed?

Some people read this passage, and choose to live a radical life with only the bare necessities or very few social connections. But before you throw out your gaming system or quit your after-school activities, re-read the passage. But this time, look carefully at what Jesus tells His disciples in the second half.

For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?

This passage is not necessarily about giving up the important things in your life. Instead, it is about giving yourself up to the Lord. When you surrender yourself to God, you find eternal life in Him. But you can't truly surrender to Him if you give yourself fully to something (or someone) else. Let's make another list...

What things in your life are you giving more of yourself to than God?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

If any of these items overlap with the first list you made, it may be time to evaluate your heart or the role of that thing in your life. Your soul cannot be traded for anything in this world. Jesus tells us this so that we can understand why His offer of eternal life with Him is so incredible. Take care that you are not surrendering yourself to the fleeting things in this life, and instead surrender yourself to the life-giving gospel of Jesus Christ.

WEEK 1 DAY 4

Read the following devotional and answer the questions on the next page.

Read Romans 12:15-17.

These verses can be found in the letter that the Apostle Paul wrote to the Romans. Most of these instructions seem simple enough; after all, why wouldn't you be happy for those who are happy and sad for those who have just experienced great sadness? And although it can be difficult not to give people a taste of their own medicine, most of us can see the benefit of acting honorably even if those around us have not. So why did Paul need to write this to the group of believers in Rome?

Much like our culture today, the Romans had a “live your truth” kind of culture. On any given day, a Roman citizen had access to some of the best entertainment in the world. Art, music, and many gods and goddesses became the focus of many Roman people. And with all this access to the beautiful things in life, the temptation to have everything was high.

Paul could see clearly that if the believers in Rome gave into the temptation to value these fleeting things over actual people, the Church would die out, and people in Rome would miss out on hearing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

A Christ-follower who prioritizes their relationship with others will seek out those who need to hear the Gospel. They will not be caught up in their own wisdom. Rather, they will continually strive to see God's purpose in every situation.

Now read Luke 15:1-10.

In these two parables, Jesus shows us what it looks like to rejoice when the lost are found. And He is conveniently telling these parables to a crowd of sinners and outcasts minutes after the Pharisees (Jewish leaders at the time) had scoffed at the idea of a godly teacher keeping company with such people.

WEEK 1 DAY 5

Read the devotional below and answer the questions on the following page.

The question you might be asking right now is, “I believe that I am found. But now what?”

Believe it or not, you are hardly the first Christ-follower to wrestle with questions about how to live out your faith. You have experienced something life-altering, or more accurately, life-giving. When you came to faith in Jesus Christ, you took on a new identity. So, yeah, it’s going to take a little time and patience to figure out all that means.

The next few weeks are going to help you do just that. But why wait until then? Let’s get started right now!

Read James 1:22-23.

What stands out to you about this passage?

Most people first notice the words “doers” and “hearers.” (If you didn’t, that’s OK. You probably noticed something else equally important!) This passage comes from a letter written by James, Jesus’ brother. (Jesus and James would have shared the same mother, Mary, but different fathers. James’ father was Joseph, and Jesus’ father was, well, God.) Assuming that James grew up close in age to Jesus, he would have had a lot of chances to watch Jesus closely while also listening to His messages.

He would have also seen how different peoples’ lives played out after encountering Jesus. It is no surprise that James spends his letter talking about the importance of putting God’s Word to practice in your life, not just listening to it.

Take a moment to answer these two questions:

1. What does it mean to be a hearer of God's Word?

2. What does it mean to be a doer of God's Word?

James would have seen A LOT of people hear God's Word throughout his lifetime. But he could tell this wasn't enough to cause a life change. Something about being a doer of God's Word inspired James to write his short but powerful letter to the Church.

Take a moment to think about how you are a doer of God's Word. In the space on this page, write down some things you have heard in God's Word (Scripture) but haven't yet done. An example might be, "I know I should show patience to others."

Pick one of the items that you wrote above, and commit to being a doer of God's Word today. Even if you struggle, give it your best shot!