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MAKE IT MATTER

The title 'MAKE IT MATTER' is rendered in a large, bold, sans-serif font. Each letter is filled with a white-to-yellow gradient and has a thick black outline. The letters are stacked vertically, with each letter in a row overlapping the one below it. The colors of the outlines and the fill gradient vary slightly between rows, creating a vibrant, multi-colored effect.

LIVING A LIFE OF IMPACT
FOLLOW-UP DEVOTIONAL JOURNAL

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO: _____

DATE STARTED: _____

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The background features a complex digital aesthetic. On the left, there's a dark, starry field with blue and purple light trails. This transitions into a grid of multi-colored dots (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple) that forms a rainbow-like spectrum. Overlaid on this grid are white, glowing rectangular outlines. The text 'EPHESIANS 2:10' is rendered in a large, white, bold, sans-serif font with a black outline, positioned vertically on the right side of the image.

EPHESIANS 2:10

**“FOR WE ARE
HIS WORKMANSHIP,
CREATED IN CHRIST
JESUS FOR GOOD
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GETTING STARTED



If you're holding this book, you (probably) recently spent a few days going through the Make It Matter study with your youth group. Maybe you did this during a Disciple Now, or a retreat, or at camp. However, you came to start your journey with Make It Matter, this book will help you continue it.

Everyone wants to change the world. But how do you define real impact? Do you define impact by the total number of followers or likes? Do you define impact by being invited to the right places with the right people? Or maybe you define impact by achievements, where your contribution to the world is measured in trophies or scores. If so, here's a hard truth: trophies and likes can make an impact, but not truly matter.

Real impact happens when God works through us. And when we grasp this truth, the way we see our lives and the world around us changes. Make It Matter shows how much difference a life empowered by the Word can make; how Jesus is the power source for a life that matters; how God designed us to impact the world together; and how trusting in God's plan is the key to real impact.

You're going to take a deeper look at each one of these concepts. Look at the next page to see how this Book works.



HOW THIS BOOK WORKS



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, the key to sticking with this through four weeks is commitment. Your routine may change, but your commitment to meet God each day 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 the Book. The close relationship with God that 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 REALLY 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 passages of Scripture; 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 that are 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. If you miss a day or two (or four), don't throw in the towel. 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.

**WEEK
ONE**

INT

TROO

Before starting Week 1, read this short introduction

Who influences you? Who in your life has impacted who you are?

Our parents, grandparents, or guardians often influence us. Their personalities or habits shape our personalities or habits.

Our friends influence us. Without knowing it sometimes, we talk alike, dress alike, and enjoy the same music; the list goes on and on.

In some cases, maybe there's someone who you don't even know who has influenced you. Maybe something an author or preacher or some other significant person said or did has impacted your life.

The truth is that you are shaped by many outside forces. Some positively, some negatively.

What influences you? And how is your life changed as a result? You're about to find out.

So, let's get started! Turn to page 10 for Week 1, Day 1.



WEEK ONE DAY ONE

Read today's devotion below and answer the questions on page 11.

One of the truths that serve as the heart of Make It Matter is that we are created as God's workmanship, and we must embrace each day with intentionality. Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." God has given us the tools to do His work, and so we must embrace the day to make it matter.

Would you consider yourself an artist? (You might have just laughed out loud.) Even if you think you do not have an artistic bone in your body, you are still an artist. Seems odd to say that, right? You are a creative human being simply because you were made in the image of a wildly creative God.

Take a minute to read Ephesians 2:1-10.

God is an intentional God. You were not an afterthought. Ephesians 2:10 shows that God created you to walk in the ways He has already envisioned for you. Knowing that God has designed you with such great intent should make you feel empowered to live your life in an intentional way that brings glory and honor to Him.

One of the many cool things about God is that He didn't create you and just leave you hanging. He equips you with the right tools to accomplish the work He has for you. He has gifted you with unique abilities. It may be hard for you to realize, but you have a creative side that was carefully pieced together by God. Lean into Him and watch how He can use you in ways you have never imagined.

Take a few minutes to reflect on how God created you. In the space below, make two columns. In the left column, write down all the ways God has gifted you. What are your skills, your passions, your interests, your talents, and so on? Spend time praying over those gifts. Then, on the right side, write down a few ways that you think God may be leading you to serve Him with the tools He's given you to "make it matter."

WEEK ONE DAY TWO

Read the devotional below and answer the questions on page 13.

We can't "be with Jesus" in the same way that the disciples were. But that's why we have God's Word. By being grounded in God's Word, we put ourselves in the position to let the Word of God do the work. The nature of the Word is active. And when it is IN us, it works through us.

There is a popular cliché that goes something like this: you are a combination of the people you spend the most time around. While you are your own person, there is still a truth revealed in this phrase that speaks to the core of all human beings. If you spend an extended amount of time around someone, you will notice that your speech, behaviors, and interests can begin to mirror that person.

There is a great example of this - in a good way - found in the lives of the disciples and apostles. Open your Bible to Acts 4:1-13 and read those verses about Peter and John's experience.

Acts is wild. In these first verses of chapter 4, Peter and John, who were two disciples of Jesus, find themselves in some trouble with the law. This isn't Live PD type of trouble, but they were thrown in prison by the religious leaders for preaching about Jesus' resurrection. Peter and John had the chance to stand before the council later and were asked why they were preaching such things. Surely the council thought someone had put them up to it. However, Peter continued to preach the Gospel. He proclaimed the Good News that salvation is found in Jesus alone. After Peter boldly spoke to the council this way, it became evident to them that Peter and John had been in Jesus' midst.

It did not take long for the religious leaders to realize that Peter and John had spent a decent amount of time with Jesus. They talked, acted, and preached in a way that showed their close relationships with Him. While you are not able to be "with" Jesus in the same way that the disciples were, you still have great access to Him. One of the primary ways to be with Jesus now is to be in His word. Scripture tells us that the word of God is living and active (Hebrews 4:12). When you spend time in the Word studying and committing it to memory, you might be surprised by how God works in and through you. People who are around you will be able to say, "you've been with Jesus."

1. What are some ways you can be sure to stay grounded in the Word?

2. You might not be standing before a council of religious leaders in biblical times, but there are still other times in your life that call for boldness. In what ways can you be bolder in sharing the Gospel?

3. Are there areas in your life that don't look like Jesus? What can you do to fix that?

Close your time in prayer, asking God to empower you to be bold for the Gospel.

WEEK ONE

DAY THREE

Read today's devotional and then spend some time alone reflecting on what God is teaching you.

The Apostle Paul understood that He wasn't chosen by Christ to do big things because of his work. God chose him, and this is what helped him see that a life of real impact is only possible because of the work Jesus did.

How easy is it to boast in your accomplishments? Answer: very easy. If you get a good grade on a test, you might think, "I get all the credit for this. I studied so hard for this test." Even with good spiritual moments, it can be easy to build up yourself. If you find that you successfully avoided a certain temptation, you might think that you did so out of sheer will power. Though, in both instances, God is working through you. While it's not wrong to be proud of yourself, your ultimate praise should be reflected in God. You have to give credit where credit is due.

One person who had a few words to say about not boasting in himself was Paul. Open your Bible and read Romans 15:3-11.

What an incredible testimony, right? If you aren't very familiar with Paul's backstory, let's put it simply: he was a bad dude. Once he became a follower of Christ, everything changed! He went from persecuting the church to being its greatest advocate. Paul recognized that he was probably the last person on the planet who had any reason to boast in his accomplishments. In the passage you read, Paul is sure to begin with a picture of the Gospel. The importance of this is that Paul knows he is nothing apart from Christ. In any work for the Gospel that Paul accomplished, he knew his place, and that was not as the one who should receive glory. He consistently pointed back to Christ's grace in his life.

The same is true for you. You were not chosen because of some massively wonderful work that you did. Yet you can live a life of great Gospel impact because of the work that Christ did on the cross. He is deserving and worthy of every bit of praise. He should always receive the credit He is due.

TAKE SOME TIME TO BE AWAY FROM EVERYTHING FOR A BIT. TURN YOUR PHONE OFF, FIND A QUIET ROOM, OR GO FOR A WALK, AND JUST PRAY. ASK GOD TO REVEAL AREAS IN YOUR LIFE WHERE YOU'VE NOT GIVEN HIM THE GLORY HE'S DUE. SPEND TIME TALKING TO HIM ABOUT HOW YOU CAN TURN FROM BOASTING IN YOURSELF TO MAKING SURE YOUR FIRST PRIORITY IS TO GIVE HIM PRAISE.



WEEK ONE DAY FOUR

Read today's devotion and then write out a prayer in the space provided.

Paul models a truth that it's easy to forget: One of God's main ways of empowering us to live a life of REAL impact is to give us friends with whom we can live out our faith.

Think about your favorite shows that you stream on Hulu, Netflix, etc. You might watch a wide variety of shows, but there's a theme that exists in almost every show: Friendship.

If you take a minute to think through the shows you watch, there is often a central friend group or at least a main character who has one or two best friends along for the ride. Have you ever thought about why friendships are important in pop culture and your own life? It's because you are not meant to live life alone. God delights in community.

Take a minute to read Romans 16:1-6. You might need to read those verses a second time to keep all the names straight. Before you get too overwhelmed with the people mentioned or with how many times Paul uses the word "greet," let's break it down.

In these verses, Paul is showing his gratitude for his fellow supporters of the Gospel. While Paul is often considered the greatest evangelist of the New Testament, he wasn't the only one. Many of his fellow Christians were in the trenches alongside him, fighting for the Gospel in their respective contexts. Paul is praying over these people and expressing his love for them. Imagine how it must have filled Paul's heart with joy to know that he was not alone.

One incredible way that you can also have a Kingdom impact is in your community. A great blessing from God is that He gives like-minded friends who can help spur you on in your faith. You have probably already thought of a few as you read this.

If you feel like you have yet to find friends with whom you can live out your faith, pray about that! Pray that God will send friends into your life so that you might live out your faith with that community.

Use the space below to journal out a prayer thanking God for the community of friends He has given you – much like what Paul did in Romans 16 if you find yourself struggling with friendships, journal that here as well. God wants to hear those things. Use this space to write out a prayer asking him to transform your relationships and provide life-giving friendships.

WEEK ONE DAY FIVE

Read the devotion on page 18 and answer the questions on page 19.

Abraham's trust allowed him to be a part of something so amazing. Our trust empowers God's plan for our life that a life of real impact is found through living out God's will for us.

Have you ever thought, "what is God's will for my life?" That is a very loaded question that has the potential to drive you crazy. Nowhere in the Bible is it written which college you should attend, what career path you should choose, or if you should marry a specific person. That would be too easy!

One thing that every follower of Christ is called to do is trust. You won't get to know every step of every plan that God has in store for you. What you do have is the opportunity to trust and obey God as He leads you.

Today takes you to the Old Testament. Take a few minutes to read Genesis 12:1-5.

A central theme in the life of Abraham is that he trusted God. Before you think that Abraham was perfect at following God, know that he was not. He messed up a good bit. Everyone does. However, Abraham continued to return to God and seek Him. What followed was a promise of great blessing from God. This blessing did not mean that Abraham would have everything his heart desired and live a comfortable life. Far from it, actually. God blessed Abraham's trust in ways that ultimately pointed back to God. Abraham did not even get to see all the ways in which God blessed his life and his descendants. Yet he continued to trust in the God he followed.

Abraham lived a life of great impact. If you read Hebrews 11 (sometimes called the "hall of faith"), you'll notice an account of how Abraham faithfully obeyed God even when he did not know the bigger picture. Abraham was able to live a faithful life because he stayed close to God and obeyed Him.

For you to live an impactful life as a follower of God, the greatest step will be to just trust. Trust that God is much wiser than you and has a specific plan for you. You might not hear an audible voice or see writing in the sky that says, "Go to this college." Still, you can know that as you trust in God and stay close to Him, He will empower you to continue walking in His will as you make decisions. If you are walking in obedience with God, you won't ever have to wonder if you are out of His will. What a freeing thought!

1. When do you find it hardest to trust God?

2. Are you holding onto your own will and desire for your life instead of fully trusting God's will? If so, how can you change that?

3. What things do you need to eliminate or add to your life to trust God more deeply?

4. As you trust in God, what are some ways that you desire for Him to use your life to make an impact?