

Chapter 1: God

Step 1: Create a Rhythm of Renewal

Chapter outline:

- **Beginnings Matter-** “the beginning of any journey or process serves as both a starting point and a reference point” (page 9).
- **Beginnings are Important-**
 - We begin with God (Genesis 1:1)
 - “A purpose-filled scope and sequence of a life worth living must begin with the author of that life” (10).
 - Where we begin is where God wants us to put down roots and live.
 - The beginning is the destination.
 - “The place of beginning is God’s best for us in this life” (11).
 - Jesus is how we get to His beginning place
- **How to Live in the Beginning Place: Creating a Rhythm of Renewal**
 - Choose God’s Love- serve only Him
 - Recognize and Respond to God’s Everyday Morning Reminder (Lam 3:23)
 - Plan for Daily Renewal- seeking God first in everything (18-19)
 - Practice Achieving God’s Present Wants

Questions for Cohort groups:

- Introduce one another in the group, taking time to know each other
- Briefly go through the chapter with the group, sharing a few points from the outline for about five minutes. Solicit thoughts along the way. Do not feel the need to catch everything in the outline but use the outline as an anchor for you to encourage dialogue. **After this brief overview, discuss some or all of the questions:**

- 1- What is meant by the idea that *the beginning* is both a starting point and a reference point?
- 2- Name some of the journeys in the Bible that God has called people to do. (Examples: Abraham in Gen 12, Moses and the Exodus, Nehemiah and the return, Paul’s Macedonian call)
- 3- What does God call Christians to do in their lives today?
- 4- How specifically do we discover God’s call for our journey as a pastor or church leader?
- 5- What is meant by having a rhythm of renewal?
 - As a pastor or a church leader, why is it important to stay renewed?
 - How does a lack of renewal show itself negatively in a pastor or a church leader?
 - In a practical, sustainable way, how does a leader stay renewed on a daily basis?
- 6- What is the end goal for the Christian life? How does that get expressed in your life?
- 7- What would your life look like if God’s desires were met through your life’s journey?
- 8- How are God’s desires being fulfilled in your life? How can this be fulfilled in a greater way?
- 9- What is your greatest take away so far?

Chapter 2

1. We are people called out of darkness and into the marvelous light of Jesus; we were created to chase only Jesus. Similar to the sunflower chasing the sun, what does it look like in your life to live daily intentionally chasing the SON?
2. Two biggest idols in our world today are “power and popularity”, how are you impacted by these idols?
3. How do you worship Christ through both attitude and action?
4. What struggles do you have with worshipping Christ through both attitude and action?
5. What areas in your life might need improvement to better be an image-bearer of what Christ has accomplished?

Chapter 3

1. Words of hate lead to destroyed lives; words of life and love breathes hope, share an example of how you have experienced both words of hate and of life and love spoken over you. How did they impact you?
2. Does the theme of your social activity communicate you are a good tree that bears healthy fruit (Page 56)?
3. Describe a time that you wish you could take words that you spoke over someone back. Why?
4. Share any negative words spoken over you in the past that is creating a struggle for you now in increasing your capacity for leadership?
5. Words are a gift from God and should never be wasted, but rather weighted and stewarded. Reflect on your life over the past week, did you steward your words well or waste them? Why or why not?

Chapter 4

1. Crowe defines the Rest Cycle of the Redeemed in Chapter Four (Journey of Rest (Redemption Rest), “Jump Start Your Week” Rest, “Jolly Holiday” Rest, “Join With Community” Rest, and “Journey’s End” Rest. Of the first four, which one do you struggle with most? Which is most natural to you?
2. Crowe states the “God’s presence is God’s provision, plain and simple.” (69) How would you explain that statement to someone else? Can you share an example of this principle from your own life/ministry?
3. How often to you take time away from the routine and activity of life and seek relaxation rest? Can you give an example of how this looks in your life?
4. Crowe states, “The church is at its best impacting the world when fellowship among its saints is considered an essential priority.” (81) How do you make fellowship with the saints a priority outside the “job description?” How do you keep joining with the community restful and not all work?

Chapter 5

1. Crowe says, "Being created as relational beings means that to be fully human and lead a life pleasing to God, I must care about relating to others." (93) Many pastors avoid developing "deep" relationships with church members for a variety of reasons, positional authority, fear of being "burned," fear of accusations of favoritism, etc. What are your views on how a pastor is to relate to the people of the congregation?
2. The author spends time looking at relationships based upon the four Greek words translated "love" in the New Testament. He begins with *storge*. How do you cultivate family relationships that honor God and are balanced with work life.
3. Next is *Philia*. How are you prioritizing friendships that reflect Christ? How do you avoid the trap of busyness that hinders godly friendships?
4. Third is *Eros*. If you are married, what are you doing to honor that relationship in order that your marriage reflects God's design? What is one thing you could do to take this relationship to the next level God has for you?
5. The last is *Agape*. How have you experienced the unconditional love of God? Give an example of what this has looked like practically in your life.

Chapter 6

1. Define attitude. What does this look like in a practical sense?
2. How are a person's attitude and the Spirit related?
3. Share a time when a church was adversely affected by a person's attitude. Share a positive example.
4. How can a leader contribute to refocusing themselves to having an attitude like Christ (see Phil 2:5-11)?
5. What are some practical ways to help others to refocus?

Chapter 7

1. What does it mean to have a moral vision?
2. How does a moral vision and gospel relate? What Scripture passage supports this?
3. How have you struggled concerning lust? How have you been victorious?
4. Jesus mentioned lust in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:28-30). What is Jesus's point regarding this matter and about compromise?
5. Where does humility play a factor when considering sin in self and others?
6. What does it mean to follow a gospel of grace? How does this relate to having an identity in Christ?
7. How does a leader help his church focus on having a healthy moral vision?

Chapter 8

1. Respect and honor may sound the same, but they are different. Respect is the what and honor is the how. Give an example of how you honor someone that you respect.
2. If a person is made in God's image, they are worth honoring. Is it ever hard for you to honor someone? Why or why not?

3. How are you currently using the gifts that God has given you for his kingdom? Are you celebrating them?
4. How have you seen wealth be both a blessing and a terrible privilege?
5. Do you consider yourself tribal? Why or why not?
6. Is there a specific area in your life that needs altering to show greater respect to people, all people?

Chapter 9

1. When we live in the light it results in freedom of the soul; we're not trapped within a lie or deception. Describe a time in your life where you were trapped by deception? How did it make you feel?
2. If must be committed to walking in the light of truth every day, in every conversation, with every post on social media and with every use of our resources. What is hard about this for you?
3. Which type of lie or lies resonated with you and why?
4. A character of integrity, being Holy like Christ is what allows us to shine like stars and live our best life; how do you currently take inventory of your own life and how well you are shining (daily rhythms)?
5. Share an example of a leader that demonstrated integrity in a moment of crisis.

Chapter 10

1. Crowe states, "Many of us are trying to keep up, measure up, or stand out...and it is exhausting." What advice would you give to another leader about avoiding the trap of comparison? How have you had success in avoiding this pitfall?
2. Society tells us that what we have is never enough. Can you share an example of how you celebrated a victory as enough and sufficient? Can anyone relate a time when God clearly showed you that what he provided was sufficient regardless of societal expectations?
3. Crowe shares with us the essence of Matt. 6:19-21 is that material possessions are consumed, corroded, or confiscated. How would you best relate to your church the truth that the only way to avoid these things, according to Jesus, is to use them for the glory of God?
4. People often equate contentment with happiness. How would you define each? How would you distinguish between the two?
5. Paul said that he had learned contentment. Brent Crowe says that contentment is a process and grows over time. What things are you doing to lean and grow in contentment?
6. What are some ways to "steward our expectations" (207) so that our desire of things (this means desiring the right things) doesn't become THE thing?