

## Workshop – Building Habits for Morning Devotions

- The heart of this workshop is to help you build rhythms of grace in your life.
  - By prayer, By reading, By remembering
- To build disciplines for morning devotions and learn how to redeem the first of your day to become your most cherished time with the Father.

### The Scriptures show us how to give the first thought and the first word of the day to God:

**Psalm 5:3** O LORD, in the morning you hear my voice; in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch.

**Psalm 88:13** But I, O LORD, cry to you; in the morning my prayer comes before you.

#### **Psalm 57:7 – 8**

**7** My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast! I will sing and make melody!

**8** Awake, my glory! Awake, O harp and lyre! I will awake the dawn!

**Psalm 119:147** I rise before dawn and cry for help; I hope in your words.

### Every New Day is a Fresh Opportunity to Enjoy God

#### **Lamentations 3:22 – 23**

**22** The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end;

**23** they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

- For Christians, the beginning of the day should not be burdened and oppressed with anxious concerns for the day's work and cares.
  - At the threshold of the new day stands the LORD who made it.
- All the darkness and distraction of the night retreat before the clear light of the dawn.
  - As the shadows run and hide when the sun rises, learning how to awake with God is the way to have all unrest, all impurity, all care and anxiety in your heart flee before Him.

### The Scriptures remind us of the men who rose early to seek God and carry out his commands.

This was the practice of many great men in the Bible, such as Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and Joshua.

- See **Gen. 19:27, 22:3; Exo 8:16, 9:13, 24:4; Jos 3:1, 6:12**, etc...

The gospels, never speak a superfluous word, and often say of Jesus himself:

**Mark 1:35** And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.

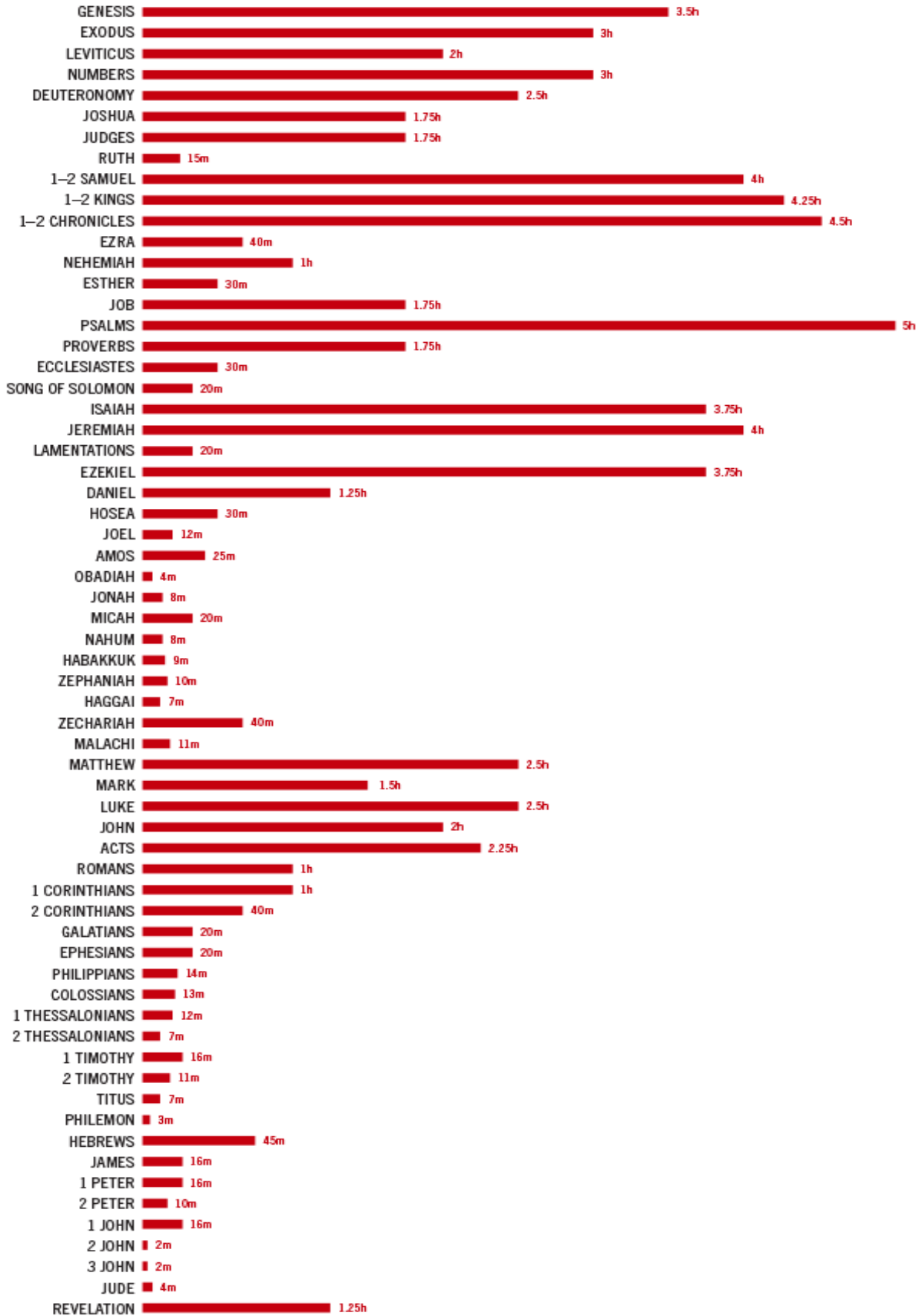
### Some rise early because of restlessness and worry.

**Psalm 127:2** It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep.

- But it is a good discipline to learn to rise early to seek God and give Him the first of your day.

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### Bible Reading Time



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**Reading tips:** Prayer. Presence. Pause. Patience. Persistence.

### 1) Prayer

Seek God before, seek Him during, and seek Him after!

Remember, it's a relationship with God as your Father, and prayer is a key aspect of engaging with God in His Word.

### 2) Presence

Remember that God is with you, and you are with Him.

Spending time in His Word is about time with Him.

### 3) Pause

Take time to consider, think, meditate on these words.

There is no rush, it's a process and a life-long journey of thoughtfully dwelling on the wonders of God's truth.

### 4) Patience

The living power of the Word will come, the Word of God will do the powerful work in your heart that God says it will. But this takes a patient approach, knowing that as we continue to fill ourselves with His Word, His Word will effectually work in us!

With God's Word in our hearts, God has something special He can work with to enliven that Word in our hearts... because rather, if we only have other worldly things in our heart, this closes us out to God's working in that way.

### 5) Persistence

Don't stop, keep going, persist in this, little by little, day by day!

This will mean that we will need to re-arrange our time, lives, interests, and activities so that we are making time and space to have consistent and persistent time in the Scripture.

Godliness is profitable for all times and being diligent for the purpose of godliness will bring great profit to our lives now, and in the eternal life to come.

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### Remembering

**Psalm 77:11** I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your wonders of old.

**Psalm 105:5** Remember the wondrous works that he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he uttered,

**Psalm 143:5** I remember the days of old; I meditate on all that you have done; I ponder the work of your hands.

### **Ephesians 2:11 – 13**

**11** Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—

**12** remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

**13** But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

“Don’t forget to remember...” - an indictment of the human tendency to be consumed by the “here and now” and lose sight of God and His faithfulness.

**Pattern:** forgetfulness leading to unthankfulness; unthankfulness leading to envy; envy leading to covetousness; covetousness leading to (or rather, is) idolatry

### Setting up Ebenezers

- The Israelites had seen a great defeat by the hands of the Philistines in a place called Ebenezer.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 4:1, 16 - 22**

**1** And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out to battle against the Philistines. They encamped at Ebenezer, and the Philistines encamped at Aphek.

- After a great defeat, the Ark of the Covenant was taken by the Philistines from Ebenezer to Ashdod.
  - Two of the priests Hophni and Phinehas were slain.
- And a man came back to report it to the priest/judge of Israel

**16** And the man said to Eli, “I am he who has come from the battle; I fled from the battle today.” And he said, “How did it go, my son?”

**17** He who brought the news answered and said, “Israel has fled before the Philistines, and there has also been a great defeat among the people. Your two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been captured.”

**18** As soon as he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell over backward from his seat by the side of the gate, and his neck was broken and he died, for the man was old and heavy. He had judged Israel forty years.

**19** Now his daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant, about to give birth. And when she heard the news that the ark of God was captured, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed and gave birth, for her pains came upon her.

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**20** And about the time of her death the women attending her said to her, “Do not be afraid, for you have borne a son.” But she did not answer or pay attention.

**21** And she named the child Ichabod, saying, “The glory has departed from Israel!” because the ark of God had been captured and because of her father-in-law and her husband.

**22** And she said, “The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured.”

- Then, 20 years later... now Samuel is the priest and last judge of Israel

### **1 Samuel 7:4 - 13**

**4** So the people of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashteroth, and they served the LORD only.

**5** Then Samuel said, “Gather all Israel at Mizpah, and I will pray to the LORD for you.”

**6** So they gathered at Mizpah and drew water and poured it out before the LORD and fasted on that day and said there, “We have sinned against the LORD.” And Samuel judged the people of Israel at Mizpah.

**7** Now when the Philistines heard that the people of Israel had gathered at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the people of Israel heard of it, they were afraid of the Philistines.

**8** And the people of Israel said to Samuel, “Do not cease to cry out to the LORD our God for us, that he may save us from the hand of the Philistines.”

**9** So Samuel took a nursing lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. And Samuel cried out to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD answered him.

**10** As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to attack Israel. But the LORD thundered with a mighty sound that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion, and they were defeated before Israel.

**11** And the men of Israel went out from Mizpah and pursued the Philistines and struck them, as far as below Beth-car.

**12** Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen and called its name Ebenezer; for he said, “Till now the LORD has helped us.”

**13** So the Philistines were subdued and did not again enter the territory of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

- 1) At the very place where setback and defeat happened...
- 2) Victory and deliverance
- 3) REDEEMPTIVE ROCK - God has helped us thus far...

*Here I raise mine Ebenezer  
Hither by thine help I'm come  
And I hope by thy good pleasure  
Safely to arrive at home  
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it  
Prone to leave the God I love  
Here's my heart, o, take and seal it  
Seal it for thy courts above*