



MYSTERIES OF GOD
Retreat/Group Companion WORKBOOK



THE MYSTERIES OF GOD

Retreat/Group Companion

WORKBOOK

RICHARD T. CASE



To my wife, Linda, with whom it is always quite fun to seek the Mysteries of God. Her curiosity and desire to seek the truth of things that are not known naturally but are available to all of us. We seek God's revelation that will provide the answers to these mysteries which are purposeful—so that we do seek to know from Him, do not try to figure them out ourselves, and enjoy the journey to discover these wonderful truths. As we do, we can live at a higher spiritual level and then help others discover these for themselves—is a wonderful joy to both receive and be part of the process for others to receive. They are quite interesting and remarkable. Her encouragement to continue to learn these mysteries is a positive driver toward moving forward and not quitting on the process when it is complicated and not readily understood in the natural. It is an honor to have such a partner.

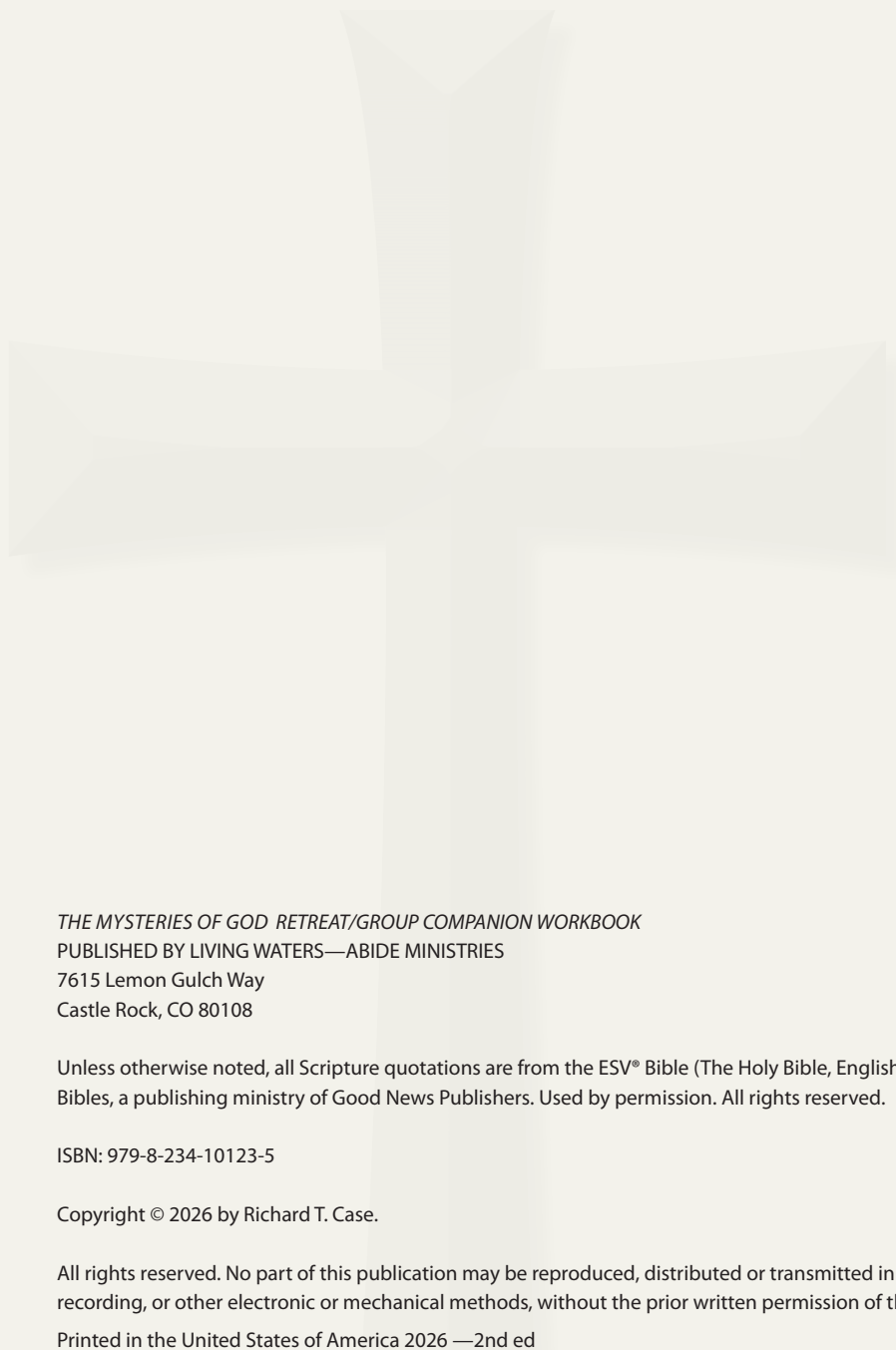
We together also wish to honor our family who have learned this and join us in pursuing God's mysteries—always a joy to have open discussion on these.

Acknowledgments

We wish to honor all the leaders of our **Abide Ministries**. As each person and each couple have learned to that God's mysteries are available to us and are important to receive, we serve to build the body of first our leadership, and then others to whom participate in the courses and retreats. We together experience the joy of the "ah ha" moments when discover is known. The leaders are committed to walking with others in this amazing journey of mysteries.

These leaders are:

Jake and Mary Beckel
Caden and Lauren Cardie
Colton and Alicia Cardie
Heath and Rebecca Cardie
Rich and Janet Cocchiaro
Larry and Sherry Collet
Katherine Cornell
Scott and Kristen Cornell
Dom and Dawn Deluca
David and Melissa Dunkel
Tom and Susanne Ewing
Rick and Kelly Ferris
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Jeff and Angela Lemond
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Don and Rachelle Light
Tito and Tawanda Mattei
Chris and Heidi May
Rich and Kathy Meringolo
Preston and Lynda Pitts
John and Brenda Presko
Dan and Kathy Rocconi
Bob and Keri Rockwell
Steve and Carolyn VanOoteghem
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**A mystery is truth
that can only
be known by
revelation.**

If you're taking this course, this is a great place to pause and write down two things in your workbook: (1) Are there any mysteries you've thought about—places in Scripture or in life where you've said, "I wonder what that really is all about"? Write them down. (2) What are you facing personally right now that feels difficult, complex, or like an enigma? His will for you in the things you're dealing with may itself be a mystery. Naming what you're facing will provide the context for the rest of the course.

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If you'd like to know more about
Abide Ministries,
please see our pages
at the back of the workbook

LESSON 1:

WHY GOD SPEAKS IN MYSTERIES

1. THE PURPOSE OF GOD'S MYSTERIES

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **Why might Jesus speak in stories that aren't easily understood on the surface?**
- **What does it tell you about God that He purposely sets up His truth this way?**
- **When you don't understand something in Scripture, what is your first instinct—to figure it out, or to come to Him?**

Again he began to teach beside the sea. And a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea, and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. ² And he was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: ³ "Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. ⁴ And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. ⁵ Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. ⁶ And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. ⁸ And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold." ⁹ And he said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." ¹⁰ And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. ¹¹ And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables, ¹² so that

"they may indeed see but not perceive,
and may indeed hear but not understand,
lest they should turn and be forgiven."

³⁰ And he said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? ³¹ It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, ³² yet when it is

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sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”³³ With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it.³⁴ He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.

Mark 4:1–12, 30–34 ESV

PAUSE AND REFLECT:

1. Verse 34 says He explained everything privately to His disciples. What does that single word—privately—tell you about how God intends for you to receive His truth?

2. Rich said religion offers a system; the kingdom offers a relationship. Where in your own walk have you been tempted to substitute a system for time with Him?

3. When you hit something in Scripture you don’t understand, what is your default first move—and what does Mark 4 invite you to do instead?

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2. THE WORD CAME INTO THE WORLD

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **What does it mean that Jesus is called “the Word”?**
- **If the Word created everything, what does it imply about who has the right to interpret it?**
- **Why does John say the world “did not know him” when the world was made through Him?**

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

John 1:1–4, 10–13 ESV

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PAUSE AND REFLECT:

1. John says of Jesus, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." How does this verse reframe what it means to "seek truth"?

2. What is the difference between knowing about Jesus and receiving Him as the Word?

3. Verse 13 says God's children are born "not of the will of man, but of God." How does that protect you from thinking you can figure mysteries out by your own willpower?

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3. THE WORD THAT STANDS ON ITS OWN

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **If something is true whether or not you accept it, how should that change the way you approach it?**
- **Jesus says He has not come to judge—but His word will judge. What is the difference?**
- **What does it mean that He speaks only what the Father has commanded Him to speak?**

⁴² Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³ for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God. ⁴⁴ And Jesus cried out and said, “Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. ⁴⁵ And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. ⁴⁶ I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. ⁴⁷ If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. ⁴⁸ The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. ⁴⁹ For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. ⁵⁰ And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.”

John 12:42–50 ESV

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PAUSE AND REFLECT:

1. If the word stands on its own—true whether you accept it or not—what does that imply about the danger of leaning on your own interpretation?

2. What is one area in your life where you've been hoping God will exempt you from a clear command? What does this passage say about that hope?

3. Rich described forgiveness as an example of a hard mystery. Where is your "hard mystery" right now—the place where you'd rather have an exemption than a revelation?

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4. COMING TO THE LIGHT

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **What is the difference between “coming to the light” and “loving the darkness”?**
- **Why might evil works make a person hate the light?**
- **If eternal life starts now (not just in heaven), what changes about today?**

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. ²⁰ For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. ²¹ But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”

John 3:16–21 ESV

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PAUSE AND REFLECT:

1. Verse 19 says the judgment is that light came and people loved the darkness because their works were evil. What does that tell you about what is really at stake when we resist coming to Him with the truth?

2. Rich said your whole lifetime is meant to be a life of discovering truth. Does your week reflect that? What would it look like if it did?

3. What is one truth God is showing you that you'd rather keep in the dark? What would it look like to bring it into the light this week?

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5. HOW JESUS OPERATED

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **Jesus says the Son can do nothing of His own accord. Why is that statement so striking?**
- **What does it mean that He sees what the Father is doing?**
- **If Jesus operated by revelation rather than logic, what does that mean for you?**

¹⁶ And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. ¹⁷ But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working." ¹⁸ This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. ¹⁹ So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. ²⁰ For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. ²¹ For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. ²² For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, ²³ that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.

...

³⁰ "I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.

John 5:16–23, 30 ESV

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PAUSE AND REFLECT:

1. Jesus says, "The Son can do nothing on his own." If that was true of Him, what does it mean for the way you make decisions today?

2. How does the Pharisees' system illustrate what religion looks like when it replaces relationship?

3. What is one decision you're carrying right now where you've been operating on logic alone? What would it look like to bring it to Him for revelation?

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6. TRUTH BEFORE PILATE

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **How does Jesus describe the purpose for which He was born?**
- **What does He mean when He says, “Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice”?**
- **Pilate asks, “What is truth?”—but never waits for the answer. What does that reveal about him?**

²⁸ Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the governor’s headquarters. It was early morning. They themselves did not enter the governor’s headquarters, so that they would not be defiled, but could eat the Passover. ²⁹ So Pilate went outside to them and said, “What accusation do you bring against this man?” ³⁰ They answered him, “If this man were not doing evil, we would not have delivered him over to you.” ³¹ Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.” The Jews said to him, “It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death.” ³² This was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of death he was going to die. ³³ So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” ³⁴ Jesus answered, “Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?” ³⁵ Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?” ³⁶ Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.” ³⁷ Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.” ³⁸ Pilate said to him, “What is truth?” After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, “I find no guilt in him.

John 18:28–38 ESV

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PAUSE AND REFLECT:

1. Jesus says, "For this purpose I was born—to bear witness to the truth." What does it mean for your life that the King of Kings was born for that purpose?

2. What is the difference between asking, "What is truth?" as a real question versus as a closing statement?

3. Where in your own walk have you asked God a "Pilate question"—sounding curious, but really walking away before the answer?

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7. PUTTING ON THE NEW MAN

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **What does Paul mean by “the futility of their minds” and “hardness of heart”?**
- **What is “the old self”—and why does it have to be put off?**
- **How is the new self “created after the likeness of God”?**

¹⁷ Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. ¹⁹ They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. ²⁰ But that is not the way you learned Christ!—²¹ assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, ²² to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Ephesians 4:17–24 ESV

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PAUSE AND REFLECT:

1. What does “put off the old self” actually look like in your daily routine—not in theory, but in concrete behavior?

2. Paul says, “Be renewed in the spirit of your minds.” How is that different from simply trying harder to think differently?

3. When was the last time you chose the old man and immediately felt the loss of revelation? What pulled you back?

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8. CLEANSED AND SENT

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **What is Isaiah's first response when he sees the Lord?**
- **Why is cleansing required before sending?**
- **What does it mean that Isaiah accepts the call so quickly after being cleansed?**

¹ In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one called to another and said:

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory!"

⁴ And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. ⁵ And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" ⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷ And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for."

⁸ And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me." ⁹ And he said, "Go, and say to this people:

"Keep on hearing, but do not understand;
keep on seeing, but do not perceive."

¹⁰ Make the heart of this people dull,
and their ears heavy,
and blind their eyes;
lest they see with their eyes,
and hear with their ears,
and understand with their hearts,
and turn and be healed."

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¹¹ Then I said, "How long, O Lord?" And he said:

"Until cities lie waste

without inhabitant,

and houses without people,

and the land is a desolate waste,

¹² and the Lord removes people far away,

and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.

¹³ And though a tenth remain in it, it will be burned again, like a terebinth or an oak,

whose stump remains

when it is felled."

The holy seed is its stump.

Isaiah 6:1–13 ESV

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PAUSE AND REFLECT:

1. Isaiah's first reaction to seeing God was, "Woe is me—I am lost." Why is that response a sign of spiritual health, not weakness?

2. What is the difference between salvation (the once-for-all transfer into eternal life) and daily cleansing (the ongoing work to live in the new man)?

3. Where in your week are you operating uncleansed—not unsaved, but uncleansed—and how is it dulling your hearing?

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9. THE HARDENED HEART OF PHARAOH

Now a hard question: if God designed mysteries this way, doesn't that mean He keeps people from receiving them? Especially Pharaoh—Scripture says God hardened his heart. Did Pharaoh really have a choice? Did God purposely make it so he could not receive any of these mysteries? If that is true, then maybe it is the luck of the draw—maybe God is purposely making sure some people cannot receive Him.

Let's investigate what that really means.

THE STORY BEGINS—ALREADY HARD

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **What is Pharaoh's very first response when Moses arrives?**
- **Did Pharaoh start with a soft heart that God then hardened—or a hard heart that simply got harder?**

¹ Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.'" ² But Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, and moreover, I will not let Israel go." ³ Then they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword." ⁴ But the king of Egypt said to them, "Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people away from their work? Get back to your burdens." ⁵ And Pharaoh said, "Behold, the people of the land are now many, and you make them rest from their burdens!" ⁶ The same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their foremen, ⁷ "You shall no longer give the people straw to make bricks, as in the past; let them go and gather straw for themselves.

...

¹¹ Go and get your straw yourselves wherever you can find it, but your work will not be reduced in the least."

Exodus 5:1–7, 11 ESV

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The Staff and the Serpent

⁸Then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, ⁹“When Pharaoh says to you, ‘Prove yourselves by working a miracle,’ then you shall say to Aaron, ‘Take your staff and cast it down before Pharaoh, that it may become a serpent.’” ¹⁰ So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the Lord commanded. Aaron cast down his staff before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent.

¹¹ Then Pharaoh summoned the wise men and the sorcerers, and they, the magicians of Egypt, also did the same by their secret arts. ¹² For each man cast down his staff, and they became serpents. But Aaron’s staff swallowed up their staffs. ¹³ Still Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the Lord had said.

Exodus 7:8–13 ESV

The Nile Turned to Blood

¹⁴ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Pharaoh’s heart is hardened; he refuses to let the people go. ¹⁵ Go to Pharaoh in the morning, as he is going out to the water, and stand on the bank of the Nile to meet him. Take in your hand the staff that turned into a serpent. ¹⁶ And you shall say to him, ‘The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, “Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness.” But so far, you have not obeyed. ¹⁷ Thus says the Lord, “By this you shall know that I am the Lord: behold, with the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water that is in the Nile, and it shall turn into blood. ¹⁸ The fish in the Nile shall die, and the Nile will stink, and the Egyptians will grow weary of drinking water from the Nile.”’” ¹⁹ And the Lord said to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, their canals, and their ponds, and all their pools of water, so that they may become blood, and there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, even in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone.’” ²⁰ Moses and Aaron did as the Lord commanded. In the

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sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants he lifted up the staff and struck the water in the Nile, and all the water in the Nile turned into blood.²¹ And the fish in the Nile died, and the Nile stank, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile. There was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.²² But the magicians of Egypt did the same by their secret arts. So Pharaoh's heart remained hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the Lord had said.²³ Pharaoh turned and went into his house, and he did not take even this to heart.²⁴ And all the Egyptians dug along the Nile for water to drink, for they could not drink the water of the Nile.

Exodus 7:14–24 ESV

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Two Hebrew Words for “Hardened”

In the Hebrew of this story, two different words are translated “hardened.” They alternate every single time:

1. **Resolute/strengthened:** the heart became stronger in what it already believed—already hard, and now more entrenched in being hard.
2. **Dull/insensitive:** the heart became grievous, burdensome, dull, and insensitive to the truth.

So Pharaoh’s heart was already hard at the start, and it was simultaneously becoming more entrenched and more dull as the plagues went on.

The Frogs

¹² So Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, and Moses cried to the Lord about the frogs, as he had agreed with Pharaoh. ¹³ And the Lord did according to the word of Moses. The frogs died out in the houses, the courtyards, and the fields. ¹⁴ And they gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank. ¹⁵ But when Pharaoh saw that there was a respite, he hardened his heart and would not listen to them, as the Lord had said.

Exodus 8:12–15 ESV

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The Gnats

¹⁸ The magicians tried by their secret arts to produce gnats, but they could not. So there were gnats on man and beast. ¹⁹ Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the Lord had said.

Exodus 8:18–19 ESV

The Flies

30 So Moses went out from Pharaoh and prayed to the Lord. 31 And the Lord did as Moses asked, and removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; not one remained. 32 But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and did not let the people go.

Exodus 8:30–32 ESV

The Livestock

⁶ And the next day the Lord did this thing. All the livestock of the Egyptians died, but not one of the livestock of the people of Israel died. ⁷ And Pharaoh sent, and behold, not one of the livestock of Israel was dead. But the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

Exodus 9:6–7 ESV

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The Hail

²⁰ Then whoever feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh hurried his slaves and his livestock into the houses, ²¹ but whoever did not pay attention to the word of the Lord left his slaves and his livestock in the field. ²² Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, so that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, on man and beast and every plant of the field, in the land of Egypt." ²³ Then Moses stretched out his staff toward heaven, and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth. And the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt. ²⁴ There was hail and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very heavy hail, such as had never been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. ²⁵ The hail struck down everything that was in the field in all the land of Egypt, both man and beast. And the hail struck down every plant of the field and broke every tree of the field. ²⁶ Only in the land of Goshen, where the people of Israel were, was there no hail. ²⁷ Then Pharaoh sent and called Moses and Aaron and said to them, "This time I have sinned; the Lord is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong. ²⁸ Plead with the Lord, for there has been enough of God's thunder and hail. I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer." ²⁹ Moses said to him, "As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will stretch out my hands to the Lord. The thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, so that you may know that the earth is the Lord's. ³⁰ But as for you and your servants, I know that you do not yet fear the Lord God." ³¹ (The flax and the barley were struck down, for the barley was in the ear and the flax was in bud. ³² But the wheat and the emmer were not struck down, for they are late in coming up.) ³³ So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh and stretched out his hands to the Lord, and the thunder and the hail ceased, and the rain no longer poured upon the earth. ³⁴ But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he sinned yet again and hardened his heart, he and his servants. ³⁵ So the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people of Israel go, just as the Lord had spoken through Moses.

Exodus 9:20–35 ESV

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WHY GOD SPEAKS IN MYSTERIES

The Locusts

¹⁶ Then Pharaoh hastily called Moses and Aaron and said, "I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you. ¹⁷ Now therefore, forgive my sin, please, only this once, and plead with the Lord your God only to remove this death from me." ¹⁸ So he went out from Pharaoh and pleaded with the Lord. ¹⁹ And the Lord turned the wind into a very strong west wind, which lifted the locusts and drove them into the Red Sea. Not a single locust was left in all the country of Egypt. ²⁰ But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go.

Exodus 10:16–20 ESV

The Firstborn

⁴ So Moses said, "Thus says the Lord: 'About midnight I will go out in the midst of Egypt, ⁵ and every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the cattle. ⁶ There shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there has never been, nor ever will be again. ⁷ But not a dog shall growl against any of the people of Israel, either man or beast, that you may know that the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.' ⁸ And all these your servants shall come down to me and bow down to me, saying, 'Get out, you and all the people who follow you.' And after that I will go out." And he went out from Pharaoh in hot anger. ⁹ Then the Lord said to Moses, "Pharaoh will not listen to you, that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt." ¹⁰ Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh, and the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go out of his land.

Exodus 11:4–10 ESV

LESSON 1:

WHY GOD SPEAKS IN MYSTERIES

PAUSE AND REFLECT:

1. If God said, “The Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart,” but the deeper reading shows Pharaoh hardened his own heart by rejecting truth, what does that tell you about how God respects human will?

2. Rich said a believer can be in the same spot as Pharaoh—life is hard, and we assume God did it. Where might that be quietly happening in your heart?

3. What is the difference between asking God hard questions with a soft heart and refusing to listen with a hard heart?

LESSON 1:

WHY GOD SPEAKS IN MYSTERIES

10. FROM HOLY TO SATAN IN TWENTY MINUTES

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **How does Peter receive the revelation of who Jesus is—by figuring it out, or by some other means?**
- **What does Jesus mean when He calls Peter “Satan”?**
- **What does it look like to “set your mind on the things of God” rather than the things of man?**

²⁰ Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ. ²¹ From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. ²² And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.” ²³ But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.” ²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. ²⁶ For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? ²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.

Matthew 16:20–27 ESV

LESSON 1:

WHY GOD SPEAKS IN MYSTERIES

PAUSE AND REFLECT:

1. Peter received an extraordinary revelation and immediately stumbled back into flesh-thinking. What does that say about how quickly we can shift from one to the other?

2. What might Jesus have said to Peter if Peter had asked, "Lord, what do You mean You must suffer and die?" instead of rebuking Him?

3. Where in your life right now are you tempted to "rebuke" something Jesus has spoken because it doesn't match what you wanted to hear?

LESSON 1: WHY GOD SPEAKS IN MYSTERIES

 PAUSE AND WRITE

Before you close this workbook: in one sentence, what is the most important thing the Lord said to you in this lesson—and what is one specific way you will respond to Him this week?

[illegible]

LESSON 1:

WHY GOD SPEAKS IN MYSTERIES

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Use these nine questions for personal study and small-group discussion. They build on the whole lesson—not on any single section.

Scriptural Understanding

Three questions that test your grasp of the biblical text in this lesson and the keywords in those passages.

1. In Mark 4:11–12 Jesus says the secret of the kingdom of God has been given to His disciples while those outside hear in parables “lest they should turn and be forgiven.” In the context of the whole passage and the rest of this lesson, what is Jesus actually saying about why God speaks in mysteries—and what is He NOT saying?

2. John 18:37 records Jesus saying, “Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.” Unpack the keyword listens. What does it imply about the posture of someone who is “of the truth,” and how is that different from someone who merely hears words about Jesus?

3. In the Pharaoh narrative (Exodus 5–11), the Hebrew uses two different words translated “hardened”—one meaning resolute/strengthened and the other meaning dull/insensitive. Why does it matter that both words are alternated throughout the story, and what does that pattern teach us about how a heart actually becomes hard?

LESSON 1:

WHY GOD SPEAKS IN MYSTERIES

Deeper Understanding

Three questions that ask you to recall and articulate the key concepts of the lesson.

4. Rich said, "Life with Me is not a system. Life with Me is not law. Life with Me is relationship." In your own words, explain how a system can mimic relationship and yet completely miss it—and why God designed mysteries specifically to prevent that substitution.

5. Trace the connection between three statements from this lesson: (a) "The Word stands on its own," (b) "Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice," and (c) "You can't receive revelation in the old man." How do these three together describe how God has designed the Christian life?

6. Peter went from receiving the highest revelation ("You are the Christ, the Son of the living God") to being called "Satan" in the span of a few verses. What is the mechanism Jesus identifies for that fall, and what would Peter have needed to do to stay in the kingdom?

LESSON 1:

WHY GOD SPEAKS IN MYSTERIES

Personal Application

Three questions that move from understanding to obedience.

7. Name one current “enigma” in your life—a circumstance, a relationship, or a question where God’s will feels like a mystery to you. What is the very next step of being with Him you could take this week to begin receiving the revelation you need?

8. In what specific area have you been quietly hoping God would exempt you from a clear command (forgiveness, generosity, purity, surrender of a relationship, etc.) because the cost feels too high? What does the truth that “the word stands on its own” mean for that area?

9. Where in your week are you most likely to slip from the new man back to the old man—and what is one practical, repeatable way you will “put on the new man” at that point of slippage going forward?

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST



**Our hearts harden
because we
keep rejecting
opportunities to
receive the truth, and
the natural makes it
harder and harder for
us to soften.**

SECTION 1—THE SOURCE OF ALL MYSTERY

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **To Whom does heaven itself ascribe wisdom, might, and glory?**
- **Why does the location of these treasures matter for how we receive them?**

¹¹ Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, ¹² saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"

¹³ And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"

¹⁴ And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" and the elders fell down and worshiped.

Revelation 5:11–14 ESV

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

REFLECT

1. When John saw heaven, who were the angels and every creature worshiping, and what specifically did they ascribe to Him?

2. If wisdom, might, honor, and glory all reside with Him, then in order for us to receive them, where must we be—and with Whom?

3. How does joining heaven's worship of Christ change the way we approach the mysteries we are seeking to understand?

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **Daniel faced a king's demand impossible by human means. As you read, watch how he responds.**
- **What does Daniel expect from God before he even asks?**

¹⁴ Then Daniel replied with prudence and discretion to Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon.

¹⁵ He declared to Arioch, the king's captain, "Why is the decree of the king so urgent?" Then Arioch made the matter known to Daniel.

¹⁶ And Daniel went in and requested the king to appoint him a time, that he might show the interpretation to the king.

¹⁷ Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions,

¹⁸ and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

¹⁹ Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

²⁰ Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might.

²¹ He changes times and seasons; He removes kings and sets up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding;

²² He reveals deep and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him.

²³ To You, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for You have given me wisdom and might, and have now made known to me what we asked of You, for You have made known to us the king's matter."

Daniel 2:14–23 ESV

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

REFLECT

1. Nebuchadnezzar demanded both the dream and its interpretation. Why is this “the epitome of a mystery,” and what made it humanly impossible?

2. When Daniel went in and asked the king for a couple of days, what was he expecting from God—and how do we know he was confident, not hopeful?

3. Daniel does not say merely, “God can interpret dreams.” What does he say God does, and how does that shape our posture when we face our own impossible situations?

PAUSE AND WRITE

Where in your own life are you facing something only God can reveal? Write down the situation, then write what it would look like to expect Him to reveal it before you ever bring it to Him.

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

SECTION 2—CHRIST IN YOU: THE HOPE OF GLORY

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **Paul calls something previously hidden “now revealed.”**
- **What does it mean that the mystery itself is a Person, and that Person dwells in you?**

²⁴ Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of His body, that is, the church,

²⁵ of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known,

²⁶ the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to His saints.

²⁷ To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Colossians 1:24–27 ESV

REFLECT

1. The mystery, Paul says, is now revealed to those with a heart to hear. Who is the “riches of the glory” of this mystery, and where is He located?

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

2. If you need revelation of mysteries, Paul has just connected the dot for you. Through Whom will you receive that revelation, and why does Paul present this as a comfort, not a burden?

3. Where is Christ when He says He will reveal the mysteries to you? What does that imply about how “close” the answer actually is?

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **Paul publicly confronts Peter—a man who already knew the truth.**
- **How could someone who once received revelation drift back into law?**

¹¹ But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

¹² For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party.

¹³ And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.

¹⁴ But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

¹⁵ We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners;

¹⁶ yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

¹⁷ But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not!

¹⁸ For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor.

¹⁹ For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God.

²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

²¹ I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

Galatians 2:11–21 ESV

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

REFLECT

1. Peter already understood scripture and truth. He had been the very first to receive that the gospel goes to the Gentiles without partiality. So what, unfortunately, did he drift into?

2. Paul's warning is sharp: if you operate by intellect, even while you think you are following God, where will you drift back to—and what happens to your hearing of God's voice?

3. When Peter drew back, did Christ in him suggest that move? What had Peter actually rejected, and how did Paul's confrontation work to bring him back?

PAUSE AND WRITE

Where have you been turning revelation into rules—converting something God said in a moment into a permanent law you now enforce on yourself or others? Name it specifically.

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

SECTION 3—THE PLEASANT PATH AND THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL

Now Scripture begins to describe what living in the mystery actually feels like. David, in Psalm 16, sketches it in poetry—a life where God Himself charts the path, and the path turns out to be pleasant.

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **David describes a “pleasant” path he could not have charted on his own.**
- **Notice when and how God speaks to him—particularly the timing in verse 7.**

¹ Preserve me, O God, for in You I take refuge.

² I say to the Lord, “You are my Lord; I have no good apart from You.”

³ As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight.

⁴ The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply; their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names on my lips.

⁵ The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; You hold my lot.

⁶ The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.

⁷ I bless the Lord who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me.

⁸ I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.

⁹ Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure.

¹⁰ For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let Your holy one see corruption.

¹¹ You make known to me the path of life; in Your presence there is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Psalm 16:1–11 ESV

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

REFLECT

1. David says the path of life is something God “makes known” to him. What does that imply about whether you can find it on your own?

2. In verse 7 David says God instructs his heart in the night. Why is night a particularly significant time for receiving from God, and what is happening to your logic while you sleep?

3. How many of David’s paths fall in pleasant places? What does this tell you about God’s default intention for your life when you are walking with Him?

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- Pay close attention to the tense of the verbs.
- What has already happened before you ever asked?

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,

⁴ even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love

⁵ He predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will,

⁶ to the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has blessed us in the Beloved.

Ephesians 1:3–6 ESV

REFLECT

1. Paul says God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. What is the tense of that verb, and why does it matter?

2. Where are these blessings located, and what does that tell you about the realm in which the mystery operates?

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

3. If His good pleasure has already been set in place, what is left for you to do—and what disqualifies a person from experiencing it?

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **What did Christ's blood purchase, and what does it now make possible for you to receive?**

⁷ In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace,

⁸ which He lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight,

Ephesians 1:7–8 ESV

REFLECT

1. What does redemption and forgiveness release you from, and what does it free you to do?

2. Paul says God has lavished His grace on us “in all wisdom and insight.” How does this connect grace to the revelation of the mystery?

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

3. If you no longer have to be perfect, what is the one thing you do have to do?

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **Paul names the mystery directly.**
- **Think about what it implies: His will, for you, is described as a mystery.**

⁹making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose, which He set forth in Christ

¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth.

Ephesians 1:9–10 ESV

REFLECT

1. “Making known” means to disclose, reveal, show. What is it that He is making known to us?

2. If His will for you is described as a mystery, can you figure it out on your own? What does that imply about every plan you draft without Him?

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

3. How does this passage redefine the goal of the Christian life—from “discover the right rules” to what?

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **Who lives within the believer?**
- **What is His role in delivering the counsel of God’s will to you?**

¹¹ In Him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him Who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of His glory.

¹³ In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,

¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory.

Ephesians 1:11–14 ESV

REFLECT

1. Paul reiterates: Who is sealed within you, and what does His presence guarantee?

LESSON 2: THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

2. You can receive the counsel of His will and know it—but only on one condition. What is it?

3. Even though Christ is in you, can you shunt Him off? How does that happen, and what is the antidote?

 PAUSE AND WRITE

Where in your life have you been deciding on your own and calling it His will? Write it down. Then ask Him directly: "What is the mystery of Your will here?" Leave space and listen.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the left side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

SECTION 4—DEMONSTRATING THE MYSTERY: WORKMANSHIP AND WITNESS

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **Paul writes about a stewardship—a mystery now made known not only to people, but to a different audience entirely.**
- **Watch for who else is meant to see God’s wisdom.**

¹ For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—

² assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you,

³ how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly.

⁴ When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ,

⁵ which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

⁶ This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

⁷ Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God’s grace, which was given me by the working of His power.

⁸ To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,

⁹ and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things,

¹⁰ so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

¹¹ This was according to the eternal purpose that He has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord,

¹² in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in Him.

¹³ So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.

Ephesians 3:1–13 ESV

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

REFLECT

1. Paul says the church makes known the manifold wisdom of God. To whom—and why is that audience surprising?

2. If we are demonstrating God's wisdom to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places, what kind of activity must therefore be happening in our lives?

3. Why does merely doing things in the natural fail to "make known" God's wisdom to the principalities and powers—what would actually impress them?

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **We are seated with Him in the heavenlies, and we are His workmanship.**
- **What comes first—the works, or the walking?**

⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us,

⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—

⁶ and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

⁷ so that in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,

⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Ephesians 2:4–10 ESV

REFLECT

1. Paul says God raised us up with Him and seated us in the heavenly places. Where do you have revelation of the riches of His grace—and where does it then translate into the natural?

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

2. You are His workmanship, created for good works which God prepared beforehand. Who determines what counts as "good"?

3. If God prepared specific good works for you in advance, what does that mean about trying to do everything, or about taking on assignments that were not actually given to you?

 PAUSE AND WRITE

What is your specific assignment in this season—the one God prepared beforehand for you? Be honest about what it is and what it is not. What “good works” have you been doing that He never actually asked of you?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

SECTION 5—MATURING OTHERS IN THE MYSTERY

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **Paul describes maturity in Christ.**
- **Where is wisdom hidden, and what is required to access it?**

²⁴ Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of His body, that is, the church,

²⁵ of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known,

²⁶ the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to His saints.

²⁷ To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

²⁸ Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

²⁹ For this I toil, struggling with all His energy that He powerfully works within me. [...]

^{2:1} For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face,

² that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ,

³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Colossians 1:24–2:3 ESV

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

REFLECT

1. Who has all the wisdom and knowledge, and where is He located?

2. When Paul says he labors to “present everyone mature in Christ,” what does he actually mean by maturity in this context?

3. How does the mystery multiply? What is your role in helping someone else discover the will God has for them?

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- Paul warns about being taken captive.
- What replaces revelation when we drift, and where is the fullness of deity actually located?

⁴ I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments.

⁵ For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

⁶ Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,

⁷ rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

⁹ For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,

¹⁰ and you have been filled in Him, who is the head of all rule and authority.

Colossians 2:4–10 ESV

REFLECT

1. Paul says the fullness of deity dwells bodily in Christ—and that you have been filled in Him. What does this say about whether anything is missing in what is available to you?

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

2. You have all of Christ right now—but have you experienced all of Him? What does that distinction reveal about the journey of revelation?

3. Paul does not promise exemption from trouble. Why is the existence of trouble in your life actually an opportunity for the mystery to be displayed?

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **Riches are not condemned here—but pursuit is redirected.**
- **What does Paul tell us to chase instead, and Whose example does he point to?**

¹¹ But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.

¹² Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

¹³ I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in His testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession,

¹⁴ to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,

¹⁵ which He will display at the proper time—He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords,

¹⁶ who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.

¹⁷ As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

¹⁸ They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,

¹⁹ thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

1 Timothy 6:11–19 ESV

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

REFLECT

1. Does Paul say material riches are bad? If not, what is the distinction he draws—and what is the danger when riches become the pursuit?

2. Paul lists what we should pursue: righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. How does pursuing these positions us to receive His revelation?

3. Why does Paul invoke Christ's "good confession before Pontius Pilate" at this exact point—and what does he expect you to go look up?

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- This is the “good confession” Paul referenced.
- What single sentence from Jesus reveals the mechanism by which truth is received?

³⁶ Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But My kingdom is not from the world.”

³⁷ Then Pilate said to Him, “So You are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to My voice.”

³⁸ Pilate said to Him, “What is truth?” After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, “I find no guilt in Him.”

John 18:36–38 ESV

REFLECT

1. Paul’s reference to Pilate is not a casual aside. What was the “good confession,” and how does it apply to receiving the riches of God’s glory?

2. Jesus gives the single mechanism for receiving truth in one short sentence. What is it—and how does it tie this entire lesson together?

LESSON 2: THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

3. When Paul references something briefly in scripture, what does the author of this teaching say is the ideal response from the reader?

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **Paul returns to the same theme: revelation.**
- **Why does he repeat this, and who is now included in “partakers”?**

¹ For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—

² assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you,

³ how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly.

⁴ When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ,

⁵ which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

⁶ This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

⁷ Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God’s grace, which was given me by the working of His power.

Ephesians 3:1–7 ESV

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

REFLECT

1. Paul says “Gentiles”—but who does that ultimately include in the broader scope of the mystery?

2. Paul does not say the inheritance is automatic. He says you are a “partaker.” What does it mean to partake—and what does refusal to partake look like?

3. How does the metaphor of being invited to a meal help clarify the difference between God’s offer and our reception?

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- Paul prays for something that already exists in you to be experienced more fully.
- What is the role of the Spirit, the inner being, and the community in this process?

¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,

¹⁶ that according to the riches of His glory He may grant you to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in your inner being,

¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

¹⁸ may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,

¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us,

²¹ to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Ephesians 3:15–21 ESV

REFLECT

1. Paul prays we would be filled with the fullness of God—yet earlier he said the fullness already dwells in Christ in us. How do we reconcile these two statements?

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

2. Why does Paul say we comprehend the breadth and length and height and depth “with all the saints”? What does that say about the role of community in the mystery?

3. God can do “immeasurably more than all we ask or think.” The author warns this is not an invitation to imagine bigger. What is it actually inviting?

PAUSE AND WRITE

Where have you been imagining big things and asking God to confirm them, instead of simply naming the real need and letting Him do immeasurably more than you can think? Re-write one of those prayers in His framing.

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

SECTION 6—THE MYSTERY OF LAWLESSNESS

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **Paul names a counter-mystery: the mystery of lawlessness.**
- **Identify what makes deception so dangerous—and what defense is given for those who “love the truth.”**

¹ Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to Him, we ask you, brothers,

² not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

³ Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,

⁴ who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.

⁵ Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?

⁶ And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time.

⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way.

⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of His mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of His coming.

⁹ The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders,

¹⁰ and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

¹¹ Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false,

¹² in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

2 Thessalonians 2:1–12 ESV

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

REFLECT

1. Paul calls the Antichrist the “epitome of lawlessness” and an agent of Satan. What is deception, and why is it so dangerous—what does the deceived person actually believe about themselves?

2. Paul says the mystery of lawlessness is “already at work.” What does that mean for our daily walk right now, not just in some future age?

3. Verses 10–11 give a sobering reason why deception takes hold. What did the deceived refuse to do—and what is the warning for us?

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- Lawlessness has a source.
- Notice where Paul locates it—and what fruit it bears.

¹⁹ I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

²⁰ For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.

²¹ But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.

Romans 6:19–21 ESV

REFLECT

1. Where does lawlessness come from, according to Paul? Who are you following when you walk in lawlessness?

2. When you become the determinant of truth—drawing from logic, tradition, or what someone has told you—what spiritual category have you actually entered?

LESSON 2: THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

3. Why is it so important to have other believers around you who can say, “I do not see what you are doing as of God”?

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **Paul draws sharp contrasts: light/dark, righteousness/lawlessness.**
- **Why can these never coexist in the same place at the same time?**

¹⁴ Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?

¹⁵ What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?

¹⁶ What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will make My dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

¹⁷ Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you,

¹⁸ and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me, says the Lord Almighty.”

2 Corinthians 6:14–18 ESV

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

REFLECT

1. Paul frames lawlessness as the polar opposite of light, of Christ, of truth. Can the two coexist in the same place? What does that mean about where you are at any given moment?

2. When you go to flesh, what category have you stepped into—even if you cannot tell that you have?

3. Paul says lawlessness “is in operation” right now. How would you know if you were in it without knowing?

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- John equates sin with lawlessness, and links both to abiding.
- What happens to our perception when we stop abiding?

¹ See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know Him.

² Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is.

³ And everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure.

⁴ Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

⁵ You know that He appeared in order to take away sins, and in Him there is no sin.

⁶ No one who abides in Him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen Him or known Him.

⁷ Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as He is righteous.

⁸ Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

⁹ No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God.

¹⁰ By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

1 John 3:1–10 ESV

REFLECT

1. John equates sin with lawlessness. If lawlessness is deception—believing what is not true—how does that reframe your understanding of practicing sin?

2. John says no one who abides in Him keeps on sinning. What is the link between abiding and not being deceived? Conversely, what happens to our minds when we stop abiding?

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

3. How does the author say you can “tell how it is going for you”—what is the practical fruit-test for whether you are walking with Him or in lawlessness?

PAUSE AND WRITE

Honestly assess: how is it going for you right now? Not in dollars or accomplishments, but in shalom, in resolution, in being able to hear His voice. If something is off, what is the truth you may be unwilling to hear?

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

Scriptural Understanding

1. In Daniel 2:14–23, Daniel tells the king he can show the interpretation before he has even prayed. Daniel then declares that God “reveals deep and hidden things” and “gives wisdom to the wise.” In context, what is Daniel teaching us about the relationship between God’s character and a believer’s confidence—and what is he teaching us today about how we should approach impossible situations?

2. In Ephesians 1:9–10, Paul names a single keyword that anchors this entire lesson: “mystery.” Unpack the word as Paul uses it. What does it mean that God’s will for you is described as a mystery, and what does this keyword imply for any plan you draft without first hearing His voice?

3. In John 18:37, Jesus tells Pilate, “Everyone who is of the truth listens to My voice.” In its original context, Jesus is on trial for His life and refusing to defend Himself in earthly terms. What did this sentence mean to Jesus and Pilate in that moment, and what is it saying to followers of Christ today about how truth is actually received?

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

Deeper Understanding

4. Rich teaches that the mystery of God and the mystery of lawlessness are operating at the same time, and that lawlessness feels like truth to the person inside it. Articulate, in your own words, why deception is so dangerous and what it actually is—and explain what is the only protection a believer has against it.

5. Paul says in Ephesians 3:10 that the church makes known the manifold wisdom of God “to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.” Restate the key concept: how do believers “make known” God’s wisdom to a heavenly audience, and why does this require something more than natural living?

6. Rich draws a sharp distinction between “doing good things you determine” and “joining Him in His good works prepared beforehand.” Articulate that distinction in your own words. What changes when you understand that your good works were prepared for you specifically, and that walking in them is the assignment?

LESSON 2:

THE MYSTERY REVEALED IN CHRIST

Personal Application

7. Where in your own life are you currently turning revelation into rules—taking something God said in a moment and converting it into a permanent law you now enforce on yourself or others? Name it specifically, and ask Him what He is actually saying to you in this season.

8. Rich gives a diagnostic: “How is it going for you?” Not in dollars or accomplishments, but in shalom, in resolution of conflict, in clarity of His voice. Take an honest inventory of one area of your life. What does the fruit reveal about whether you are abiding or operating in your own logic?

9. Paul says we are partakers of the promise—but partaking is something we choose. Where have you been admiring the meal but not actually eating? Identify one specific place this week where you will choose to partake—to walk with Him and let Him give you the mystery of His will—rather than going elsewhere.

LESSON 3:

OUR ROLE IN RECEIVING THE MYSTERIES



"My mysteries are going to lead you to the spectacular if you have a heart to go."

SECTION 1—GOD REVEALS BEFORE HE ACTS

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- Have you ever wondered whether God consults with His people before He acts? What does Scripture suggest about His pattern?
- If God truly reveals what He is about to do to those who walk with Him, what posture would you want to be in?

⁷"For the Lord God does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets.

Amos 3:7 ESV

LESSON 3:

OUR ROLE IN RECEIVING THE MYSTERIES

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- When you sense God is about to do something significant—perhaps something difficult—how do you typically respond? Do you draw near, or pull back?
- Notice how God speaks to Himself in verse 17. Why might He decide not to hide His plan from Abraham?

¹⁶ Then the men set out from there, and they looked down toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to set them on their way.

¹⁷ The Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do,

¹⁸ seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

¹⁹ For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has promised him."

²⁰ Then the Lord said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave,

²¹ I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know."

²² So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the Lord.

²³ Then Abraham drew near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?

²⁴ Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it?

²⁵ Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?"

²⁶ And the Lord said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake."

Genesis 18:16-26 ESV

LESSON 3:

OUR ROLE IN RECEIVING THE MYSTERIES

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- What does it look like to “negotiate” with God? Is that something you’ve ever felt comfortable doing?
- Watch how Abraham steps the number down from fifty toward ten. What is he really trying to discover?

²⁷ Abraham answered and said, “Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes.

²⁸ Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking. Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?” And he said, “I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.”

²⁹ Again he spoke to him and said, “Suppose forty are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of forty I will not do it.”

³⁰ Then he said, “Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Suppose thirty are found there.” He answered, “I will not do it, if I find thirty there.”

³¹ He said, “Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it.”

³² Then he said, “Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of ten I will not destroy it.”

³³ And the Lord went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

Genesis 18:27-33 ESV

LESSON 3:

OUR ROLE IN RECEIVING THE MYSTERIES

FOR REFLECTION

1. What is the principle in Amos 3:7, and how is it demonstrated in Abraham's exchange with God?

2. Why didn't God simply give Abraham a one-sentence answer about the righteous in Sodom? What does the back-and-forth tell us about how He prefers to communicate?

3. What could Lot's wife have done differently when she struggled with God's instruction? How does that apply to a struggle you're facing now?

PAUSE AND WRITE

Where in your life right now do you sense God may be revealing something to you that you haven't yet drawn near to ask Him about?

LESSON 3:

OUR ROLE IN RECEIVING THE MYSTERIES

SECTION 2—OUR ROLE AS MINISTERS OF THE MYSTERY

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **What does it mean to be a “minister” of the gospel? Have you thought of yourself in those terms?**
- **Paul speaks of three actions in this passage—proclaim, warn, and teach. What might each look like in everyday life?**

²⁴ Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church,

²⁵ of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known,

²⁶ the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints.

²⁷ To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

²⁸ Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

²⁹ For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me. [...]

¹ For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face,

² that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God’s mystery, which is Christ,

³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Colossians 1:24–2:3 ESV

LESSON 3:

OUR ROLE IN RECEIVING THE MYSTERIES

FOR REFLECTION

1. What three things does Paul say a minister of the mystery does (Colossians 1:28)? Describe what each looks like in your own words.

2. Why does Rich say teaching is essentially “dialoguing with someone in order to get them to dialogue with God”? How is this different from telling people what to do?

3. How does teaching this truth strengthen the teacher? What happens when a teacher proclaims it but isn’t living in it themselves?

PAUSE AND WRITE

Who in your life right now is in a position where you could declare the mystery—that God has an answer for them—and walk alongside them as they learn to dialogue with Him?

LESSON 3:

OUR ROLE IN RECEIVING THE MYSTERIES

SECTION 3—HEARING AND FOLLOWING HIS VOICE

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **What does Jesus say is the requirement for abiding in His love? Is this something you find easy or hard?**
- **Notice how often Jesus repeats some form of “if you do what I command you.” Why the repetition?**

⁹ As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.

¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.

¹¹ These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

¹² “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you.

¹⁵ No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

¹⁷ These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

John 15:9-17 ESV

LESSON 3:

OUR ROLE IN RECEIVING THE MYSTERIES

FOR REFLECTION

1. What does Jesus say is required to abide in His love (verses 9-10)? Why does He repeat the same idea later in the passage?

2. Why does Rich insist that the Bible cannot be read merely as “law”? What is the alternative he describes?

3. Why does logic so often fight against obedience? What is the right thing to do when you’re struggling to follow what God has said?

PAUSE AND WRITE

Recall a recent moment when you sensed God say one thing and your logic argued for another. What did you do—and what did the outcome reveal?

LESSON 3:

OUR ROLE IN RECEIVING THE MYSTERIES

SECTION 4—WISDOM FROM THE SPIRIT, NOT THE FLESH

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **Have you ever tried to figure out God's will purely through logic? What was the result?**
- **Paul contrasts the "wisdom of men" with the wisdom of God. What is the difference, in your own words?**

¹ And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom.

² For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

³ And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling,

⁴ and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

⁵ so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

⁶ Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away.

⁷ But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory.

⁸ None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

⁹ But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"—

¹⁰ these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

¹¹ For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

¹² Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.

¹³ And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

¹⁴ The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

LESSON 3:

OUR ROLE IN RECEIVING THE MYSTERIES

¹⁵ The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one.

¹⁶ “For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

1 Corinthians 2:1-16 ESV

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **What does it mean to be “set free from sin”? Set free for what?**
- **Notice the choice in verse 18: slaves of sin or slaves of righteousness. Why does there seem to be no third option?**

⁷ For one who has died has been set free from sin. [...]

¹⁸ and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. [...]

²² But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.

Romans 6:7, 18, 22 ESV

LESSON 3:

OUR ROLE IN RECEIVING THE MYSTERIES

FOR REFLECTION

1. Why does Paul say the wisdom of God is hidden from “the rulers of this age”? Who can receive it, and how?

2. What does it mean that the natural person finds spiritual things to be folly (verse 14)? How might that be at work in someone you know—including, perhaps, yourself?

3. What is the daily choice that comes with being “set free from sin” (Romans 6:18)? Why is there no neutral middle ground?

PAUSE AND WRITE

Identify one situation where you have been trying to receive God’s wisdom by logic. What might it look like to instead receive it by revelation today?

LESSON 3:

OUR ROLE IN RECEIVING THE MYSTERIES

SECTION 5—SPEAKING HIS WORDS FAITHFULLY

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **How do you discern when someone—including yourself—is speaking from God versus speaking from their own mind?**
- **What is the danger of declaring something to be God’s word when it is not?**

¹⁶ Thus says the Lord of hosts: “Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, filling you with vain hopes. They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord.

¹⁷ They say continually to those who despise the word of the Lord, ‘It shall be well with you’; and to everyone who stubbornly follows his own heart, they say, ‘No disaster shall come upon you.’”

¹⁸ For who among them has stood in the council of the Lord to see and to hear his word, or who has paid attention to his word and listened?

¹⁹ Behold, the storm of the Lord! Wrath has gone forth, a whirling tempest; it will burst upon the head of the wicked.

²⁰ The anger of the Lord will not turn back until he has executed and accomplished the intents of his heart. In the latter days you will understand it clearly.

²¹ “I did not send the prophets, yet they ran; I did not speak to them, yet they prophesied.

²² But if they had stood in my council, then they would have proclaimed my words to my people, and they would have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their deeds. [...]

²⁸ Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let him who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? declares the Lord.

²⁹ Is not my word like fire, declares the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?

Jeremiah 23:16-22, 28-29 ESV

LESSON 3:

OUR ROLE IN RECEIVING THE MYSTERIES

FOR REFLECTION

1. How does Jeremiah distinguish between true and false prophets? What is the central test (verses 18, 22)?

2. Why does Rich call the pastor in the three-commentaries illustration a “false prophet at the moment”? What could the pastor have done differently?

3. What does it look like, practically, when the Holy Spirit signals that something is “not of Me”? How does an inner circle help with discernment?

PAUSE AND WRITE

Have you ever—in a casual conversation, a teaching moment, or a piece of advice—declared something as God’s will when, looking back, you weren’t sure you’d heard from Him? What would faithful speech have required instead?

LESSON 3:

OUR ROLE IN RECEIVING THE MYSTERIES

SECTION 6—FAITHFUL WITH YOUR ASSIGNMENT

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **Have you ever felt that what God has given you to do is “small” or insignificant compared to others?**
- **How does God measure faithfulness in this passage?**

¹⁴ “For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property.

¹⁵ To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away.

¹⁶ He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more.

¹⁷ So also he who had the two talents made two talents more.

¹⁸ But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master’s money.

¹⁹ Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

²⁰ And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.’

²¹ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’

²² And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.’

²³ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’

Matthew 25:14-23 ESV

LESSON 3:

OUR ROLE IN RECEIVING THE MYSTERIES

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **Why might Jesus commend a “dishonest manager” for his shrewdness? What is the lesson He’s drawing out?**
- **Notice how the passage ends with “you cannot serve God and money.” How does that connect with the manager’s story?**

¹ He also said to the disciples, “There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his possessions.

² And he called him and said to him, ‘What is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your management, for you can no longer be manager.’

³ And the manager said to himself, ‘What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg.

⁴ I have decided what to do, so that when I am removed from management, people may receive me into their houses.’

⁵ So, summoning his master’s debtors one by one, he said to the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’

⁶ He said, ‘A hundred measures of oil.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.’

⁷ Then he said to another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ He said, ‘A hundred measures of wheat.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, and write eighty.’

⁸ The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light.

⁹ And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.

¹⁰ “One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much.

¹¹ If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches?

¹² And if you have not been faithful in that which is another’s, who will give you that which is your own?

LESSON 3:

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¹³ No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”

Luke 16:1-13 ESV

FOR REFLECTION

1. What was the master’s response to both the five-talent and two-talent servants? What does this reveal about how God measures faithfulness?

2. Why did the master in Luke 16 commend the dishonest manager? What was the “shrewdness” that Jesus is pointing to as a lesson for the sons of light?

3. Why does Jesus say you cannot serve God and money? What happens in the heart when someone tries to serve both?

LESSON 3: OUR ROLE IN RECEIVING THE MYSTERIES

 PAUSE AND WRITE

Identify one assignment God has given you that may seem “small.” How could you be more intentionally faithful to it this week?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal grey ruling lines, similar to notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. On the left side, there is a faint, light blue shadow or watermark-like graphic that appears to be part of the background design. The overall appearance is clean and minimalist.

LESSON 3:

OUR ROLE IN RECEIVING THE MYSTERIES

SECTION 7—PRAYING FOR REVELATION AND POWER

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **What do you typically pray for when you face an issue? Do you pray for circumstances to change, or for revelation?**
- **Paul prays specifically for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. Why might that be a more strategic prayer than asking for outcomes?**

¹⁵ For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints,

¹⁶ I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers,

¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him,

¹⁸ having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,

¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might

²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,

²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

²² And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church,

²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Ephesians 1:15-23 ESV

LESSON 3:

OUR ROLE IN RECEIVING THE MYSTERIES

As you review these verses, answer the following questions/thoughts:

- **What does it mean to be “strengthened with power through His Spirit in your inner being”?**
- **Verse 20 says God can do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think. How does that shape your expectations when you bring problems to Him?**

¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,

¹⁶ that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,

¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

¹⁸ may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,

¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

²⁰ Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us,

Ephesians 3:15-20 ESV

LESSON 3:

OUR ROLE IN RECEIVING THE MYSTERIES

FOR REFLECTION

1. What three things does Paul pray will be given to the believer in Ephesians 1:17-19? What kind of power does verse 19 describe?

2. Why does Paul pray for the Holy Spirit to strengthen the inner being (Ephesians 3:16)? What is the connection between strength and revelation?

3. How does Joel's story illustrate the principle in Ephesians 3:20? What was Joel's posture, and what was God's response?

PAUSE AND WRITE

Bring an issue or decision you're currently facing, and pray Ephesians 1:17-19 over yourself. Write down the verse, then write what you sense the Lord beginning to reveal.

LESSON 3:

OUR ROLE IN RECEIVING THE MYSTERIES

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These nine questions are intended to be worked through individually before the next group meeting. Take your time. Where Scripture is referenced, return to the passage.

Scriptural Understanding

1. In Amos 3:7, why does the Lord reveal His secret to His servants before acting? What does this pattern tell us about His relationship with those who walk with Him?

2. In John 15:9-17, what is the connection between keeping Jesus' commandments and abiding in His love? How does the shift from "servant" to "friend" in verse 15 change the disciples' posture?

3. In 1 Corinthians 2:14-16, why is the natural person unable to accept the things of the Spirit? What does Paul mean when he says, "We have the mind of Christ"?

LESSON 3:

OUR ROLE IN RECEIVING THE MYSTERIES

Deeper Understanding

4. Throughout this lesson, what is the difference between trying to figure out God's will through logic and receiving it through revelation? Why does Rich insist that logic alone will not get us there?

5. What three roles does a minister of the mystery fulfill, drawn from Colossians 1:24-2:3? Describe what each—declare, exhort, teach—looks like in practice.

6. What does it mean to be a "false prophet at the moment," using the pastor and the three commentaries as your example? What was the more faithful response he could have given?

LESSON 3:

OUR ROLE IN RECEIVING THE MYSTERIES

Personal Application

7. Where in your current life are you facing a decision in which logic is pulling you one direction and you sense God may be saying something different? Describe the situation and what you have sensed Him saying.

8. Identify one assignment from God that may seem “small” to you. What would faithfulness to it look like this week, regardless of size?

9. Pray Ephesians 1:17-19 over yourself this week, and then pray Ephesians 3:14-20 over yourself. What changes in your inner posture? What do you sense Him beginning to reveal?

AN INVITATION TO GO DEEPER

This workbook is a starting point, designed to open your eyes to the incredible life of partnership God has for you. But the journey of walking in the Spirit, hearing His voice, and ministering His power is a daily one, and we are committed to providing resources to help you live it out.

If this material has stirred your heart and you are hungry for more, we invite you to explore the other resources our ministry provides. We have developed these tools specifically to equip you and your community to walk in the fullness of what you have learned.

- **Books and Small Group Curricula:** For those who want to build a solid, biblical foundation, our books and curricula provide in-depth teaching on abiding in Christ, hearing God's voice, and living in the freedom of the Kingdom. They are perfect for personal study or for creating a powerful small group environment where you can learn and grow together.
- **Podcasts:** For encouragement on the go, our podcasts feature practical teachings and real-life testimonies of how these principles are transforming lives, families, and businesses every single day.
- **Retreats:** For a truly immersive experience, we invite you to attend one of our retreats. These are dedicated times set apart to unplug from the world, press into the presence of God, and receive personal ministry and revelation that can accelerate your journey in Him.

You were not meant to walk this path alone. To explore these resources and take the next step in your adventure with God, please visit our website. We look forward to partnering with you as you discover the joy and power of living the full covenant life He has for you.

More information is available at www.AbideMinistries.com



History of **Abide Ministries**



In the 1990s, Rich and Linda Case received a call from God to dig into what it means to truly live in the Spirit.

In the 1990s, Rich and Linda Case received a call from God to dig into what it means to truly live in the Spirit. They had been believers for most of their lives and regularly attended church and Bible studies, but began to realize that, despite knowing the Bible intellectually, their personal experiences seemed disconnected from the promises and truths found in scripture. As they then learned these essential truths through their abiding and hearing God's voice – and began to see the grand life play out in their lives God called them to give that knowledge away. In 2001, God initiated the ABIDE ministry at a retreat with friends in Austria, and through their personal experience of this abiding life, their friends noticed the change in their lives and inquired if Rich and Linda could host a similar retreat the following year. This was repeated three years in a row, and then God called them to host weekend retreats in their home in Colorado.

Through the formal development of the truths revealed by God with Abiding and additional electives, they founded All for Jesus – Living Waters Ministries, now Abide Ministries – and have seen it grow exponentially since then, with 24+ retreat leaders all over the world, 29 online courses, eight books on various aspects of living life with Christ, and a daily podcast. Rich and Linda have also worked with various churches to strengthening them with the truths of an abiding life in Christ, and seeing Christ bring reconciliation and new vision to desperate situations.

Their heart is to bring the truths and promises of God to as many people as possible, showing everyone that when you abide in Christ and seek Him daily, your life can be completely and utterly transformed – enabling you to experience the grand life promised by God.



Vision

At our core, we believe in walking along God's path and connecting to the vine (abiding). As we walk in unity with others and understand God's Word as the truth, we are sure to experience His promised grand life and thus, willingly accept God's will as our chosen path.



Mission

1. Live out and invite everyone to experience the grand, spectacular, abundant life by hearing God's voice.
2. Share God's majesty, a close relationship with us as he yearns for our restoration.
3. God is majestic, grand and pure goodness, so that we can experience His nature in real life.
4. Communicate to everyone, irrespective of their condition, that all are meant to experience God's Divine Life (grand, majestic), by receiving His personal plan for us.
5. God delivers this life for us in a SUPERNATURAL way, transcending human comprehension, and thus, becoming normal in our life.
6. Teach that personal truths are revealed to us by God, grounded on His word – the embodiment of Truth.
7. Recognize that abiding in Christ changes our life in tangible, real ways, and is not just learning about or studying this life.
8. Teach that as we abide in Christ, we learn to understand and follow God's will for our lives, as He leads us personally into His grand, Divine plan for us. His personal plan calls us into His bigger story with our best interest at heart (blessed to bless others).

Statement of Non-Profit Status

Abide Ministries is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization that has been fully funded by our founders, leaders and retreat participants since its inception.

Tax-ID number: 27-1731819

Testimonies

"If I'm not abiding, I feel like I'm dying. Abiding is living...It's powerful to know that you have God's perspective on something."



Steve

"This was the first time that I understood what people meant by God's living Word. And I've been a Christian for a lot of years, but this was the first time it really came alive for me and I really could experience that."



Dan

"It doesn't matter where you are at in your walk. If you just got saved yesterday or if you've been a 20+ year believer like I have, learning how to hear God's voice and learning His will is just as important in day one as it is in day 3,426. You wanna hear God's will and this course has helped me hear Him more clearly."



Bob

"Abiding turned out to be the most transformational thing I've ever had since salvation in my Christian walk and in our marriage, and it's just been amazing. God has a path for us and He is there and He's showing it to us."



Heath

"Before, in my quiet time, it was more of a checklist thing for me to do in the morning, and, honestly, some mornings it was the thing that went if I was busy, and some days it didn't even happen. Now, it's become so personal to me and the time flies by in the morning and God speaks so directly to me and I just never felt that way on a daily basis before. That has been life-altering for me."



Rebecca

"I heard about people living in peace, I heard about people living in joy, and realizing all kinds of things around them are happening. And then we realize, wait a minute, we're there, we have peace beyond understanding."



Brad

Giving to the Ministry

Have you experienced abundant blessing from your time with Abide Ministries?

Pay it forward by donating at abideministries.com/donate and help us support others in learning how to seek Christ and abide in Him! We appreciate your desire to help us share the Abundant Life with the rest of the world.



Learn More at abideministries.com

Podcast

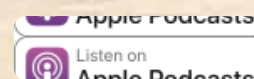
Escape the chaos and uncertainty of the world with our podcast, ***“Come and See, Finding Truth in a World of Chaos,”*** available on YouTube, Apple Podcasts, and Spotify.



CHANNEL



PLAYLIST PAGE



Tune in five days a week as our hosts, Rich Case and Kathy Rocconi, dive into the scriptures and discuss what it looks like to live an abiding life with Christ. Join us as we seek God's truth in a world of turmoil and darkness.

Online Courses



Abide Ministries online courses uncover life-changing biblical truths, with practical application and wisdom. Our courses are joyful and life-giving and are perfect for small groups as well as individuals.

Each course has an accompanying workbook. Join us as we learn about biblical topics like Hearing God's Voice, Discerning God's Will, the Covenant, Living in Forgiveness, Living in the Kingdom of God, Living in the Supernatural, Christ, Clutter and the Calendar, Living the Grand Life, and many, many more.



COURSES

Abide Retreats



Learn more at
abideministries.com

Do you have friends or a small group that you would like to experience what you just experienced?

Would you be interested in attending another retreat, which we call electives to go deeper in your walk with God?

See the various options on our website.
The topics for retreats and courses are the same.

RETREATS



COURSES



STORE

