

# THRIVE

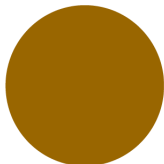


**Bible  
Grow  
Worship  
Community**

**Word**



**Sustained**







Jesus makes a bold promise. He asserts that He came to give people a rich and satisfying life. Jesus came so that we might THRIVE! He also makes clear that there is an enemy that works against Jesus’ purpose. The enemy, Jesus says, seeks to steal, kill and destroy. (John 10:10) So, what does a rich and satisfying life look like? Would we recognize it if we saw it? Is this kind of life tangible; discernible?

Throughout 2012 we will answer these questions. We will intentionally uncover observable practices and attitudes of a life that THRIVES. A life that THRIVES is a life that is connected to life in Jesus! At *the Church* we have articulated a list of identifiable “marks” that are evident in the life of one who follows Jesus. We call this list Life Marks. This list sums up life in Jesus into something that is tangible, clear, concise and accessible. Life Marks are like gauges on a dashboard that help us monitor progress to living a life in Jesus on purpose.

In 2012 we will take an in-depth look at each one of our four Life Marks by devoting 10 weeks of sermons, study and discussion to each of the four Life Marks individually.

**Sustained by the Word.**

**Dependent on Christ.**

**A visible reflection of Jesus.**

**The missional heartbeat of God.**

This journal is a part of the journey. Use it for personal reflection as we dive into God's Word. Use it also to raise your level of intentionality in your relationship with Jesus. Writing can stimulate thoughtful reflection and create accountability. Putting words on paper can help us think more clearly. It can help us slow down. Articulating goals in writing is also a great way to say "something" out loud and bring it out into the open which increases accountability.



As we go through this year we encourage you to take a Life Marks Assessment. You'll find a link on our homepage at [www.livelifetogether.com](http://www.livelifetogether.com). We would like you slow down and assess each Life Mark individually as we work through them in each 10-week segment.

The questions will help you identify your current level of alignment with each Life Mark. Based on your responses it will provide personalized recommendations for resources and actions that you can use to create and manage your own personal growth plan.

# Week 1

## Overview

### Sustained by the Word

Over the next 10 weeks we will look at the Life Mark: *Sustained by the Word*. We have defined being sustained by the Word as someone who is reading the Bible, growing in their faith, worshiping and in community. As we uncover this Life Mark be aware of the four questions below. It is our hope and prayer by the end of this 10-week series you will be able to proclaim, "I AM sustained by the Word."

#### Bible:

Am I reading, reflecting on, and responding to God's Word daily?

#### Grow:

Would people closest to me recognize that I have a growing relationship with Jesus?

#### Worship:

Does personal and public worship hold a sacred place in my life?

#### Community:

Am I being sharpened by God's Word in relationship with other Christians?

A life that *THRIVES* is created and *sustained* by the Word of God. We enthusiastically turn to the *Bible* for a daily and personal word from God, and *grow* in the knowledge and love of God, which builds *community*, and inspires true *worship*.

<sup>31</sup> Jesus said to the people who believed in him, "You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. <sup>32</sup> And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

<sup>33</sup> "But we are descendants of Abraham," they said. "We have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean, 'You will be set free'?"

<sup>34</sup> Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave of sin. <sup>35</sup> A slave is not a permanent member of the family, but a son is part of the family forever. <sup>36</sup> So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free. <sup>37</sup> Yes, I realize that you are descendants of Abraham. And yet some of you are trying to kill me because there's no room in your hearts for my message. <sup>38</sup> I am telling you what I saw when I was with my Father. But you are following the advice of your father."

<sup>39</sup> "Our father is Abraham!" they declared.

"No," Jesus replied, "for if you were really the children of Abraham, you would follow his example. <sup>40</sup> Instead, you are trying to kill me because I told you the truth, which I heard from God. Abraham never did such a thing. <sup>41</sup> No, you are imitating your real father."

They replied, "We aren't illegitimate children! God himself is our true Father."

<sup>42</sup> Jesus told them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, because I have come to you from God. I am not here on my own, but he sent me. <sup>43</sup> Why can't you understand what I am saying? It's because you can't even hear me! <sup>44</sup> For you are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies. <sup>45</sup> So when I tell the truth, you just naturally don't believe me! <sup>46</sup> Which of you can truthfully accuse me of sin? And since I am telling you the truth, why don't you believe me? <sup>47</sup> Anyone who belongs to God listens gladly to the words of God. But you don't listen because you don't belong to God." John 8:31-47

**Reflections:**

## Week 2

# Bible

### Daily Bread

(Exodus 16:1-21; 1 Corinthians 10:1-11)

<sup>1</sup> Then the whole community of Israel set out from Elim and journeyed into the wilderness of Sin, between Elim and Mount Sinai. They arrived there on the fifteenth day of the second month, one month after leaving the land of Egypt. <sup>2</sup> There, too, the whole community of Israel complained about Moses and Aaron.

<sup>3</sup> "If only the LORD had killed us back in Egypt," they moaned. "There we sat around pots filled with meat and ate all the bread we wanted. But now you have brought us into this wilderness to starve us all to death."

<sup>4</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, "Look, I'm going to rain down food from heaven for you. Each day the people can go out and pick up as much food as they need for that day. I will test them in this to see whether or not they will follow my instructions. <sup>5</sup> On the sixth day they will gather food, and when they prepare it, there will be twice as much as usual."

<sup>6</sup> So Moses and Aaron said to all the people of Israel, "By evening you will realize it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt. <sup>7</sup> In the morning you will see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your complaints, which are against him, not against us. What have we done that you should complain about us?" <sup>8</sup> Then Moses added, "The LORD will give you meat to eat in the evening and bread to satisfy you in the morning, for he has heard all your complaints against him. What have we done? Yes, your complaints are against the LORD, not against us."

<sup>9</sup> Then Moses said to Aaron, "Announce this to the entire community of Israel: 'Present yourselves before the LORD, for he has heard your complaining.'" <sup>10</sup> And as Aaron spoke to the whole community of Israel, they looked out toward the wilderness. There they could see the awesome glory of the LORD in the cloud.

<sup>11</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, <sup>12</sup> "I have heard the Israelites' complaints. Now tell them, 'In the evening you will have meat to eat, and in the

*morning you will have all the bread you want. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.”*

*<sup>13</sup> That evening vast numbers of quail flew in and covered the camp. And the next morning the area around the camp was wet with dew. <sup>14</sup> When the dew evaporated, a flaky substance as fine as frost blanketed the ground. <sup>15</sup> The Israelites were puzzled when they saw it. “What is it?” they asked each other. They had no idea what it was.*

*And Moses told them, “It is the food the LORD has given you to eat. <sup>16</sup> These are the LORD’s instructions: Each household should gather as much as it needs. Pick up two quarts for each person in your tent.”*

*<sup>17</sup> So the people of Israel did as they were told. Some gathered a lot, some only a little. <sup>18</sup> But when they measured it out, everyone had just enough. Those who gathered a lot had nothing left over, and those who gathered only a little had enough. Each family had just what it needed.*

*<sup>19</sup> Then Moses told them, “Do not keep any of it until morning.” <sup>20</sup> But some of them didn’t listen and kept some of it until morning. But by then it was full of maggots and had a terrible smell. Moses was very angry with them.*

*<sup>21</sup> After this the people gathered the food morning by morning, each family according to its need. And as the sun became hot, the flakes they had not picked up melted and disappeared. Exodus 16:1-21*

## **Reflections:**

**Reflections:**

<sup>1</sup> I don't want you to forget, dear brothers and sisters, about our ancestors in the wilderness long ago. All of them were guided by a cloud that moved ahead of them, and all of them walked through the sea on dry ground. <sup>2</sup> In the cloud and in the sea, all of them were baptized as followers of Moses. <sup>3</sup> All of them ate the same spiritual food, <sup>4</sup> and all of them drank the same spiritual water. For they drank from the spiritual rock that traveled with them, and that rock was Christ. <sup>5</sup> Yet God was not pleased with most of them, and their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

<sup>6</sup> These things happened as a warning to us, so that we would not crave evil things as they did, <sup>7</sup> or worship idols as some of them did. As the Scriptures say, "The people celebrated with feasting and drinking, and they indulged in pagan revelry." <sup>8</sup> And we must not engage in sexual immorality as some of them did, causing 23,000 of them to die in one day.

<sup>9</sup> Nor should we put Christ to the test, as some of them did and then died from snakebites. <sup>10</sup> And don't grumble as some of them did, and then were destroyed by the angel of death. <sup>11</sup> These things happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us who live at the end of the age. 1 Corinthians 10:1-11

## **Reflections:**

**Respond:** Based on what you discovered from this week in "Bible" what is one thing you perceive God is nudging you to integrate into your life right now? What will you **DO**?"

**Week 3**  
**Bible**  
**Bread of Life**  
(John 6:32-35)

<sup>32</sup> Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, Moses didn't give you bread from heaven. My Father did. And now he offers you the true bread from heaven. <sup>33</sup> The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

<sup>34</sup> "Sir," they said, "give us that bread every day."

<sup>35</sup> Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. *John 6:32-35*

**Reflections:**

**Respond:** Based on what you discovered from this week in “Bible” what is one thing you perceive God is nudging you to integrate into your life right now? What will you **DO?**”

Thrive! Can you say, *“I am reading, reflecting on, and responding to God’s Word daily”?*



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## Week 4

# Grow

## Dying on the Vine

(John 15:1-5)

*"I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. <sup>2</sup> He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. <sup>3</sup> You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. <sup>4</sup> Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.*

<sup>5</sup> *"Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing."* John 15:1-5

### Reflections:

**Respond:** Based on what you discovered from this week in "Grow" what is one thing you perceive God is nudging you to integrate into your life right now? What will you **DO**?"

## Week 5

# Grow

### Bearing Fruit

(Acts 4:1-13)

*<sup>1</sup> While Peter and John were speaking to the people, they were confronted by the priests, the captain of the Temple guard, and some of the Sadducees. <sup>2</sup> These leaders were very disturbed that Peter and John were teaching the people that through Jesus there is a resurrection of the dead. <sup>3</sup> They arrested them and, since it was already evening, put them in jail until morning. <sup>4</sup> But many of the people who heard their message believed it, so the number of believers now totaled about 5,000 men, not counting women and children.*

*<sup>5</sup> The next day the council of all the rulers and elders and teachers of religious law met in Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup> Annas the high priest was there, along with Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and other relatives of the high priest. <sup>7</sup> They brought in the two disciples and demanded, "By what power, or in whose name, have you done this?"*

*<sup>8</sup> Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of our people, <sup>9</sup> are we being questioned today because we've done a good deed for a crippled man? Do you want to know how he was healed? <sup>10</sup> Let me clearly state to all of you and to all the people of Israel that he was healed by the powerful name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, the man you crucified but whom God raised from the dead. <sup>11</sup> For Jesus is the one referred to in the Scriptures, where it says,*

*'The stone that you builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.'*

*<sup>12</sup> There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved."*

*<sup>13</sup> The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus. Acts 4:1-13*

## Reflections:

**Respond:** Based on what you discovered from this week in “Grow” what is one thing you perceive God is nudging you to integrate into your life right now? What will you DO?”

Thrive! Can you say, *“People closest to me recognize that I have a growing relationship with Jesus.”?*



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Week 6  
**Worship**  
Entering the Sacred Place  
(Hebrews 10:19-22)

*<sup>19</sup> And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. <sup>20</sup> By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place. <sup>21</sup> And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God's house, <sup>22</sup> let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water. Hebrews 10:19-22*

**Reflections:**

**Respond:** Based on what you discovered from this week in "Worship" what is one thing you perceive God is nudging you to integrate into your life right now? What will you **DO**?"

Week 7  
**Worship**  
Choosing the Sacred Place  
(Acts 2:42-47)

*<sup>42</sup> All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.*

*<sup>43</sup> A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. <sup>44</sup> And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. <sup>45</sup> They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. <sup>46</sup> They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity – <sup>47</sup> all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved. Acts 2:42-47*

**Reflections:**

**Respond:** Based on what you discovered from this week in “Worship” what is one thing you perceive God is nudging you to integrate into your life right now? What will you **DO?**”

Thrive! Can you say, *“Personal and public worship hold a sacred place in my life?”*



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## Week 8

# Community

### Identifying Pseudo-community

(Luke 11:37-54; Revelation 2:1-7)

<sup>37</sup> As Jesus was speaking, one of the Pharisees invited him home for a meal. So he went in and took his place at the table. <sup>38</sup> His host was amazed to see that he sat down to eat without first performing the hand-washing ceremony required by Jewish custom. <sup>39</sup> Then the Lord said to him, “You Pharisees are so careful to clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are filthy – full of greed and wickedness! <sup>40</sup> Fools! Didn’t God make the inside as well as the outside? <sup>41</sup> So clean the inside by giving gifts to the poor, and you will be clean all over.

<sup>42</sup> “What sorrow awaits you Pharisees! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore justice and the love of God. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things.

<sup>43</sup> “What sorrow awaits you Pharisees! For you love to sit in the seats of honor in the synagogues and receive respectful greetings as you walk in the marketplaces. <sup>44</sup> Yes, what sorrow awaits you! For you are like hidden graves in a field. People walk over them without knowing the corruption they are stepping on.”

<sup>45</sup> “Teacher,” said an expert in religious law, “you have insulted us, too, in what you just said.”

<sup>46</sup> “Yes,” said Jesus, “what sorrow also awaits you experts in religious law! For you crush people with unbearable religious demands, and you never lift a finger to ease the burden. <sup>47</sup> What sorrow awaits you! For you build monuments for the prophets your own ancestors killed long ago. <sup>48</sup> But in fact, you stand as witnesses who agree with what your ancestors did. They killed the prophets, and you join in their crime by building the monuments! <sup>49</sup> This is what God in his wisdom said about you: ‘I will send prophets and apostles to them, but they will kill some and persecute the others.’

<sup>50</sup> “As a result, this generation will be held responsible for the murder of all God’s prophets from the creation of the world – <sup>51</sup> from the murder of Abel

*to the murder of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, it will certainly be charged against this generation.*

*<sup>52</sup> “What sorrow awaits you experts in religious law! For you remove the key to knowledge from the people. You don’t enter the Kingdom yourselves, and you prevent others from entering.”*

*<sup>53</sup> As Jesus was leaving, the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees became hostile and tried to provoke him with many questions. <sup>54</sup> They wanted to trap him into saying something they could use against him. Luke 11:37-54*

## **Reflections:**

*“Write this letter to the angel of the church in Ephesus. This is the message from the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand, the one who walks among the seven gold lampstands:*

*2 “I know all the things you do. I have seen your hard work and your patient endurance. I know you don’t tolerate evil people. You have examined the claims of those who say they are apostles but are not. You have discovered they are liars. 3 You have patiently suffered for me without quitting.*

*4 “But I have this complaint against you. You don’t love me or each other as you did at first! 5 Look how far you have fallen! Turn back to me and do the works you did at first. If you don’t repent, I will come and remove your lampstand from its place among the churches. 6 But this is in your favor: You hate the evil deeds of the Nicolaitans, just as I do.*

*7 “Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches. To everyone who is victorious I will give fruit from the tree of life in the paradise of God. Revelation 2:1-7*

## **Reflections:**

**Respond:** Based on what you discovered from this week in "Community" what is one thing you perceive God is nudging you to integrate into your life right now? What will you **DO**?"

## Week 9

# Community

### Choosing Authentic Community

(Luke 15:11-32; Acts 4:23-31; Hebrews 10:23-25)

<sup>11</sup> To illustrate the point further, Jesus told them this story: “A man had two sons. <sup>12</sup> The younger son told his father, ‘I want my share of your estate now before you die.’ So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons.

<sup>13</sup> “A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money in wild living. <sup>14</sup> About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve. <sup>15</sup> He persuaded a local farmer to hire him, and the man sent him into his fields to feed the pigs. <sup>16</sup> The young man became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything.

<sup>17</sup> “When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, ‘At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger! <sup>18</sup> I will go home to my father and say, “Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, <sup>19</sup> and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant.”’

<sup>20</sup> “So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. <sup>21</sup> His son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.’

<sup>22</sup> “But his father said to the servants, ‘Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. <sup>23</sup> And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, <sup>24</sup> for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.’ So the party began.

<sup>25</sup> “Meanwhile, the older son was in the fields working. When he returned home, he heard music and dancing in the house, <sup>26</sup> and he asked one of the

*servants what was going on. <sup>27</sup> 'Your brother is back,' he was told, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf. We are celebrating because of his safe return.'*

*<sup>28</sup> "The older brother was angry and wouldn't go in. His father came out and begged him, <sup>29</sup> but he replied, 'All these years I've slaved for you and never once refused to do a single thing you told me to. And in all that time you never gave me even one young goat for a feast with my friends. <sup>30</sup> Yet when this son of yours comes back after squandering your money on prostitutes, you celebrate by killing the fattened calf!'*

*<sup>31</sup> "His father said to him, 'Look, dear son, you have always stayed by me, and everything I have is yours. <sup>32</sup> We had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!'" Luke 15:11-32*

## **Reflections:**

<sup>23</sup> As soon as they were freed, Peter and John returned to the other believers and told them what the leading priests and elders had said. <sup>24</sup> When they heard the report, all the believers lifted their voices together in prayer to God: "O Sovereign Lord, Creator of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them – <sup>25</sup> you spoke long ago by the Holy Spirit through our ancestor David, your servant, saying,

*'Why were the nations so angry?  
Why did they waste their time with futile plans?*

<sup>26</sup> *The kings of the earth prepared for battle;  
the rulers gathered together  
against the LORD  
and against his Messiah.'*

<sup>27</sup> *"In fact, this has happened here in this very city! For Herod Antipas, Pontius Pilate the governor, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were all united against Jesus, your holy servant, whom you anointed. <sup>28</sup> But everything they did was determined beforehand according to your will. <sup>29</sup> And now, O Lord, hear their threats, and give us, your servants, great boldness in preaching your word. <sup>30</sup> Stretch out your hand with healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus."*

<sup>31</sup> *After this prayer, the meeting place shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness. Acts 4:23-31*

## **Reflections:**

*<sup>23</sup> Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. <sup>24</sup> Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. <sup>25</sup> And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near. Hebrews 10:23-25*

## **Reflections:**

**Respond:** Based on what you discovered from this week in “Community” what is one thing you perceive God is nudging you to integrate into your life right now? What will you **DO**?”

Thrive! Can you say, *“I am being sharpened by God’s Word in relationship with other Christians?”*



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## Week 10

# Personal Review

I am sustained by the Word.

**Focus:** One of the 4 marks clearly evident in a life that *thrives* is that it is *sustained by the Word*. A way to assess where you are in being able to say with all confidence that you are sustained by the Word is to answer the following questions. Take some time today to search your heart and see where you are so that you might sense where God is leading you.

Am I reading, reflecting on, and responding to God's Word daily?

Would people closest to me recognize that I have a growing relationship with Jesus?

Does personal and public worship hold a sacred place in my life?

Am I being sharpened by God's Word in relationship with other Christians?

As you spend time in prayer, considering where you are with this *Life Mark: Sustained by the Word*. What personal goals would you like to write? Take some time to review your **Thrive Journal**. Notice what you wrote in the **"Reflections"** and **"Response"** sections. You may want to use the following sentence starter to help you get started:

I sense God is leading me to...

Who has God provided in your life that you would feel comfortable sharing these goals with? How might they encourage you and hold you accountable?





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