



Foundations

A BIBLE STUDY WITH
**ANDREW NOLT &
NELSON PAINTER**

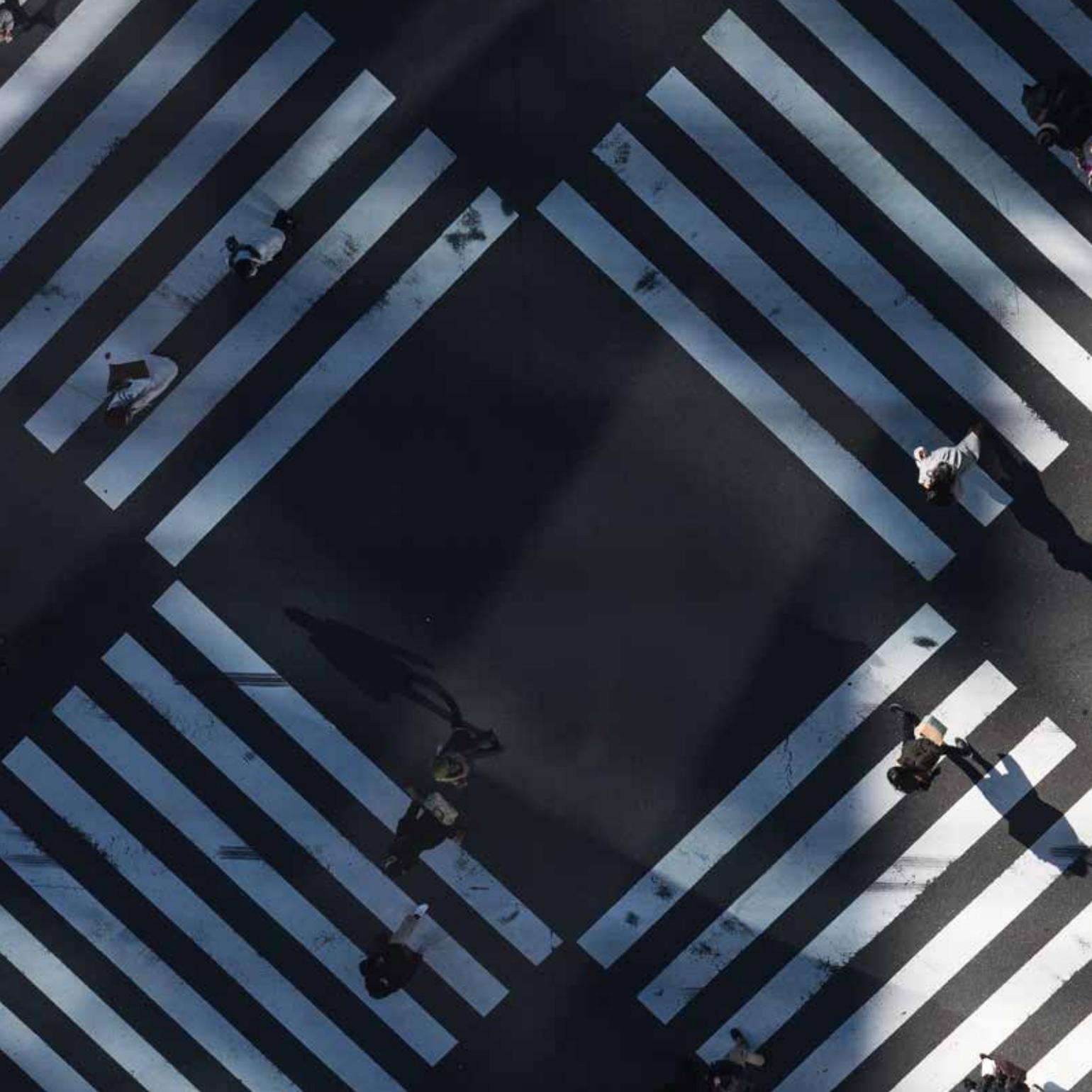
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CULTIVATE REVIVAL BIBLE STUDY SERIES

A Bible study series.
Designed to cultivate revival
and to grow stronger, together.



WEEK 1

CULTURE

An aerial, top-down view of a city street intersection. The street is dark asphalt, and the crosswalks are marked with white diagonal stripes. Several pedestrians are visible, walking across the street. Their shadows are cast long and dark on the pavement, indicating a low sun position. The word "CULTURE" is printed in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters in the center of the image. At the top, there is a solid olive-green rectangular banner with the text "WEEK 1" in white, sans-serif capital letters.

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

ROMANS 12:2

Culture trumps vision every time. You might have great vision, but if the culture is not conducive to your vision, you will never see your vision become reality.

Last year, I spoke at a conference for young leaders, and in one of my sessions I asked this question, “What is your favorite fast-food restaurant?” I had already an assumption in my mind as to what I thought the answer would be, and my hypothesis true delta did surely occur. Chick-fil-A. Every single person in the room said that Chick-fil-A was their favorite fast-food restaurant. Everyone, except for this one guy who was from Kansas or something. Poor soul said that he liked Kentucky Fried Chicken better, and then we all prayed for him. I’m joking, about the prayer part anyways. If I were to ask you the same question, I would dare say that most would say Chick-fil-A. Their food might not just be the only reason that it’s your favorite.

If the culture is not conducive to your vision, you will never see your vision become reality.

Although Chick-fil-A has some wonderful food, there are some restaurants that make certain items better than Chick-fil-A. Here’s a hot take for you, I believe wholeheartedly that Popeye’s chicken sandwich is far better than Chick-fil-A’s iconic chicken sandwich. That’s right, I said it. I would say there is something more to Chick-fil-A than just great food, it’s great service, it’s a family friendly atmosphere, it’s cleanliness, it’s that little phrase that they say at the end of your conversation going through the drive-through, “it’s my plea-

sure.” All these things are what make Chick-fil-A the most successful fast-food restaurant when you look at the ratio of sales per location. Those are a lot of specific things that you love about Chick-fil-A, but they can all be summed up in one word call culture. Culture sets the stage for everything. Everything is built on culture. So, what is culture?

Culture is something that you do without thinking about. Culture is something that becomes second nature. Let me give you another example. When you wake up in the morning and get ready to leave your house and go out to your car you start it, when you get ready to pull out of the driveway, it does not matter whether you turn left or right, you’re going to all drive on the right side of the road; and you won’t have to sit at the end of the drive and wonder about which side you’re going to have to drive on. You do it without thinking about it. Now, if you were going to go over to Europe and rent a car, you would probably have a difficult time driving around, because they drive on the left side of the road. You would have to be constantly aware, constantly thinking, constantly checking to make sure you’re doing it right. Because it’s not your culture, because culture is something that you do without thinking about it.

Culture is something you do without thinking about it.

See, there’s a culture of heaven that God wants to have become a part of your life, so much so, that you do it without having to think about it. But sometimes, following what the Word of God says, or obeying His voice feels like you’re driving on the left side of the road and it’s uncomfortable. This reveals that there’s a difference between your culture and His culture.

Romans 12:2 says to be “transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you may know what is good and acceptable and the perfect will of God.” The reality is that salvation automatically makes you a part of the family of God, but just because you are a son or daughter

doesn't mean you think like one. Just like becoming a citizen of England doesn't mean you know how to drive on the left side of the road. There is a responsibility that each son or daughter of God carries to renew their mind and adopt a culture from heaven.

Perhaps some of you can relate with this example: throughout my years as a high school student and an early college student, I was required to take certain classes. A couple of those classes revolved around learning a second language. Like most students in my area, I chose Spanish. Partly because in my small high school it was the only option, but also because I loved to eat at our local Mexican restaurant. Although I spent many semesters and even years sitting in a class for an hour a day learning to speak Spanish, I still can't speak the language fluently, and yet I have friends that learn to speak the language in a year or so. What was the difference?

Immersion. These friends that learned to speak Spanish quickly were people that decided to pack their bags and move to South America for missions. It was hard to learn the Spanish language when I only spent an hour a day practicing in it, and it would be easier to learn it if I had no other option. These friends of mine did not have English speaking people around them, so they were forced to learn quickly. If they wanted to get groceries, they had to speak Spanish. If they needed directions, they had to speak Spanish. If they needed to use the restroom, they had to speak Spanish. It's hard to "renew your mind" when you don't immerse yourself in a culture, but it becomes easier to learn, understand, and adopt a mindset when you live in it every day.

Immerse yourself
in His culture, and
you will find that
His culture begins
to become your
culture.

So, I encourage you, immerse yourself in the Word, immerse yourself with His people, immerse yourself in worship. Immerse yourself in His culture, and you will find that His culture begins to become your culture.

THIS WEEK'S QUESTIONS

What are some bad habits that you struggle with in your life? _____

What does God say about those bad habits? Or better yet, what is different about His culture versus your own? _____

What are some ways that you can begin to change your culture to be more like Heaven's culture? _____



WEEK 2

VALUE

A photograph of a brick building with a series of skylights and a metal railing in the foreground, serving as a background for the text. The building is made of reddish-brown bricks and has several rectangular skylights arranged in a row. In the foreground, there is a dark metal railing with a grid pattern. The sky is a clear, light blue.

The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;
The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.
More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

PSALM 19:9-10

To add value to others, first you must value others. - John Maxwell

Value. I never gave such things much thought until recent years. Kids will do that to you, make you think of things you've never thought of in your life. Without even knowing or really thinking about it, every single day you and I are choosing to place value on certain moments, certain things, certain people the list goes on. Every day is filled with subtle decisions of what we deem as important or not worthy of value.

What do I value, what do you value? Ever think about it? If you are struggling to find an answer, maybe a better but more convicting way to ask is what takes your money, your attention, your minutes, your hours, your days, your years and ultimately, your life? It is the answers to these questions that will tell us the answer to what we value. And furthermore, how do we even get to the point of placing value on some things, while not on other things? Does our upbringing, society, surroundings? While you ponder and maybe wrestle with finding some answers to those questions let's see if the Apostle Paul has anything to say about the matter.

To add value to
others, first you
must value others.
-John Maxwell

Read 1 Corinthians 3:10-15, after calling them God's field or building in verse 9, Paul cautions the church leaders to be careful what they use to build upon their life's foundation

which is Christ. He goes on to explain that some will probably try to use the likes of gold, silver, precious stones, wood, or hay to build their life, he reminds us that what we value will end up being the building blocks in our life and shape our attitudes, our character, our behavior and ultimately our life. Paul is right to caution the leaders and us, for what a shame it would be to build a life full of things that we considered valuable only to have them burned by the fire at the end of life's paragraph.

So what are heaven's values, what matters to God and should matter to us? What mattered to Jesus as He walked the earth, what evidence can be found of what He valued? By no means is this list exhaustive but at a quick glance, these immediately come to my mind.

He valued His relationship to the Father. Over and over and over we see Jesus escaping crowds, escaping the company of His disciples to get alone with the Father. The Son of God seems to make it a priority to get away from the distractions of life, the things that are demanding our attention and wanting so badly for us to label them as valuable, in order to connect and have fellowship with Father God.

If I don't know my own value from the Father, how can I value others?

He understood that only after the relationship and connection with the Father was in good standing, that He could be seen placing value in the relationships to the people around Him. This is where I often lose track. My relationship with the Father can be hindered for whatever reason and in turn my relationships in life then suffer. If I don't know my own value from the Father, how can I value others and add value

to others like the quote says at the beginning of this lesson. Our effectiveness in the kingdom or lack thereof is dependent on our relationship to the Father. No one in the Bible exemplified this better than David, (the man after God's own heart.) Over and over in Psalms we see David pouring out his heart, confessing his love for God and his law. Psalm

19 gives one of these examples with David saying the laws of God are more desirable than gold and honey, which, by the world's standards in David's day, would be two of the most valuable things. Sounds like a man who understood putting value on the things his God valued, a man, who like Paul, understood that it is easy to misplace our values on the wrong things.

Hopefully this brings out discussion in the group of what else you see Jesus valuing. The last one I will draw attention to is how He seems to value peace, after all He is the Prince of it! Whether it is storms in life that come and go like we will see later in the booklet, or just the fact that the Bible tells us to fear not over 350 times. The idea of peace seems so central to what He is all about. When Jesus shows up, the situation is about to calm down. Can the same be said of us? How much peace are we bringing to the party?

How much peace
are we bringing
to the party?

If nothing else, hopefully this text causes us to reflect and think about where we are placing value. Is it on things of heaven or is there some room in our life for improvement? Areas where, when the light hits it, it will burn up. Whether we realize it or not, we are placing value on things every day. Let's band together and ask the Spirit to help us make sure it is going to the right places.

**OUR EFFECTIVENESS IN THE KINGDOM OR
LACK THEREOF IS DEPENDENT ON
OUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE FATHER.**

THIS WEEK'S QUESTIONS

What other things can you add to the list of things Jesus and Heaven value? _____

Where we place our value will directly impact the amount of influence we have in life? Agree or disagree? _____



WEEK 3

INFLUENCE

An aerial photograph of a dense urban skyline, likely New York City, viewed from a high angle. The foreground shows a body of water, possibly the Hudson River, with a few small boats and a pier. The middle ground is filled with a vast array of skyscrapers and buildings of various heights and architectural styles. The background shows a clear sky with some light clouds. The overall scene is a vibrant and detailed representation of a major metropolitan area.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see
your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

MATTHEW 5:16

Steak. Let's talk about it. There is little on this earth that I enjoy more than a well-prepared steak. I'm sure I'm not alone in this department, in fact, I know for certain that there are Facebook pages, Instagram accounts and TikTok videos that are solely devoted to steaks... and I love them. I do not describe myself as a steak expert by any means, but I feel like I know my way around the "world" of beef cuts.

Some years ago my wife and I went to a high end steak house to celebrate our anniversary. I was, as they say, over the moon. I couldn't wait to see what this reputable establishment was going to bring to the table, and as they brought out our selections, I could hear my steak still sizzling from the broiler. I cut it open... perfect, medium rare. I took my first bite and... nothing... it tasted like nothing... I couldn't believe it, so I took another bite. Nothing again! You must be kidding me. I waited all this time, for me to have to ask the waiter for salt and pepper so that I could season my own food?! I was so disappointed. There was no doubt that it was a high-quality steak. It was very tender, well marbled, and cooked perfectly, yet without salt... it was just a bland piece of meat.

Without salt, even the best steak is reduced to bland; and without your influence, the world is... bland. Matthew 5:13 says, "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good

Without your
influence, the
world is bland

for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.”

You have the ability to shape the values of others and therefore change their culture.

Last week we talked about how values shape your culture, but influence opens the door for you to shape other people's culture. With their acknowledgment and permission, you have the ability to shape the values of others and therefore change their culture. Now, it would be unfair for me not to share with you that everyone doesn't want your influence. There will be people in your life who do not want your influence. It won't matter how much you want to do the right thing, or what it is that you value, there will be walls up. These are the moments when you must ride a fine line of influence versus manipulation.

I can remember going through a season of my life where I was really into exploring. The property that we live on borders hundreds of acres of protected land by the state so, there are endless things to explore. I can remember one particular cave that my brother found that we loved to go in. You were underground for about twenty minutes before you came back up somewhere else on the mountain.

I'll never forget turning the lights off when we were in the darkest part of the cave. You couldn't see your hand in front of your face and it seemed like you were in complete darkness. After a couple of minutes in the dark I began to see little pin holes of light in the ceiling. It was small pieces of light that were passing through the forest floor down into the cave. I would have never known that they were there if I hadn't taken the time to let my eyes adjust.

People need time to adjust. You're not going to change a person's beliefs and values in a

moment, it takes time. Some of them will never give time for their eyes to adjust, but some will. Over time, they will begin to see your values and become open to the possibility that you could have a beneficial influence in their life. It's exactly what Matthew is talking about in chapter 5 when he moves from salt to light. "In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." What you value shapes culture, and influence helps you shift culture in others.

**WHAT YOU VALUE SHAPES CULTURE,
AND INFLUENCE HELPS YOU
SHIFT CULTURE IN OTHERS.**



THIS WEEK'S QUESTIONS

Can you think of a time that someone influenced you in a positive way? In a negative way? _____

What did they value that had an influence on you? _____

What are some ways that you can influence those around you? _____



WEEK 4

ATMOSPHERES

The image shows the interior of a subway car. The seats are a bright orange color. There are metal handrails and poles throughout the car. In the background, a poster is visible on the wall. The poster features a man with a beard and the text "DON'T BECOME WHAT YOU HATE". The lighting is dim, creating a moody atmosphere.

But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?”
Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace, be still!” And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.

MARK 4:38-39

His authority on earth allows us to dare to go to all the nations. His authority in heaven gives us our only hope of success. And His presence with us leaves us no other choice.
-John Stott.

Do you ever think about how much influence you have on any given situation? Child of the living God, equipped with the Holy Spirit. I'm confident that there isn't a more powerful person that walks the earth. No matter the situation or environment we have the opportunity to be used by God. God can use me to change the atmosphere in a split second, in a moment, He doesn't need more than that. He just needs us to be ready to make that impact, to have our lives in order, to have our values aligned with His, to have a culture in life that mirrors heaven's culture, it is then, that we have the ability to see change in our world.

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split second.

One of my favorite Bible stories comes from Mark 4:37-40, where the disciples and Jesus get caught up in a storm out on the water. The Bible says the waves were coming into the ship. Sounds like a dire situation but where do we find Jesus? In the stern fast asleep. I love the text for a couple reasons. First, the reminder that no matter how big the storm seems that we may find ourselves in, it is absolutely nothing for God. He cares deeply for what we are experiencing and going through but even though it seems like a big deal to us, He cer-

tainly isn't the one that is losing any sleep over it. That fact may not get us ALL the peace we need in our circumstance but it's a good start.

The other part that jumps out to me both here and all through the gospels is the fact that things change when Jesus is around. Here, He rebukes the storm and peace returns to the disciples' lives. Those of us who grew up in church know all the stories, water to wine, blind eyes seeing, lame legs walking, on and on. Looking through the scriptures it appears as though one would have had a pretty difficult time staying the same or going back to normal life after an encounter with Jesus. Things change when Jesus shows up, the atmosphere gets shaken up when Jesus enters the room. So where does that leave us? The ones who bear His name, the ones He said who will do greater things on earth than the things He did.

What happens when we walk in the room, the situation, the argument? Is it a known thing that when I walk into the room, Jesus comes with me? I am not even talking about the fun

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that when I walk
into the room, Jesus
comes with me?

and exciting supernatural things we see Jesus doing in healings and other miracles. I'm just talking about the friend you have that is hurting, that is struggling to find faith in a tough situation. You can bring Christ into the situation to help heal the pain, an opportunity to bring a faith that can change the atmosphere like Jesus did out on the water.

About 20 years ago now, (which almost makes me cry thinking about) I heard singer Aaron Shust speaking in an interview on the radio. He said something so simple and yet so powerful that I, for whatever reason, have never forgotten it. It's one of those life moments where I could take you to the exact spot where I heard it and let me tell you, that is amazing because I have a terrible memory. He made the comment that, we so often are too focused on the future that it is easy to miss out on the things that are here and now. I have come back to that quote time and time again in life and found it to be so true. I think it applies to what this series is

talking about too. We all want to be great in God's kingdom, we all want to do big things in life and big things for God, and that is awesome! May we never apologize and never lose that desire. Like my four-year-old who every single day does things trying to impress and make me proud, may we never tire of trying to please Father God. But using me as the example again, I have so often failed to be faithful, diligent, and self-controlled enough in the little, often mundane, happenings of the day to day. I get five years down the road and I'm not where I feel I should be or was hoping to be because I wasn't focused on the day-by-day faithfulness and growth that it took me to reach the five-year destination. I'm too caught up in where I want to be 5 years from now that I wasn't actually taking the day-by-day steps to get there.

Some closing thoughts: I think it's pretty well known that as believers, as Christ's ambassadors, we should be the ones bringing the positive change to the world's atmospheres and situations. But are we? Looking around and in the mirror, it seems to me as the church, we have done a poor job of creating heaven's culture in our circles. We let the world dictate what is valuable in our lives rather than heaven and we are oftentimes getting influenced by the world more than we are influencing the world. May we fall before God and repent of our shortcomings in these areas while allowing Him to fill us as He sees fit, to be more like His Son, the one who changes things just by walking into the room.

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**MAY WE FALL BEFORE GOD AND REPENT WHILE
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THIS WEEK'S QUESTIONS

Can you recall a time or person that someone directly affected the atmosphere in the room when they entered it? Was it positive or negative? _____

How can I partner with other believers around me to not only have influence but change the atmosphere? _____



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