



CHAZOWN

Discover & Pursue God's Purpose for Your Life

JOURNAL

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Chazown is the Hebrew word for the dream, revelation, or vision God was thinking about when he made you. God made you on purpose and with a purpose and He wants you to know and embrace it! My goal for this six week spiritual growth initiative is to help bring clarity to your God-given purpose. When you know your special assignment from God, you can live with greater confidence, joy, and excitement knowing that the best is ahead! Chazown is designed to help you get clear and dream big with God. The resources provided in this journal are designed to help you experience and interpret your own story, appreciate your unique calling and motivate you to step into what God has next for your life.



Sean Walker
Senior Pastor



UNDERSTANDING YOUR JOURNAL

1. WEEKEND SERMON NOTES

Bring this book to church during the “Chazown” series. Use these pages to take notes on the weekly sermons.

2. SMALL GROUP GUIDE

This section gives small groups their direction for each session, which varies from week to week and includes time for discussion and prompts for putting it into practice.

3. DAILY JOURNAL

This section includes Bible passages with daily journal prompts and activities that correspond with each week’s sermon.

4. MY CHAZOWN

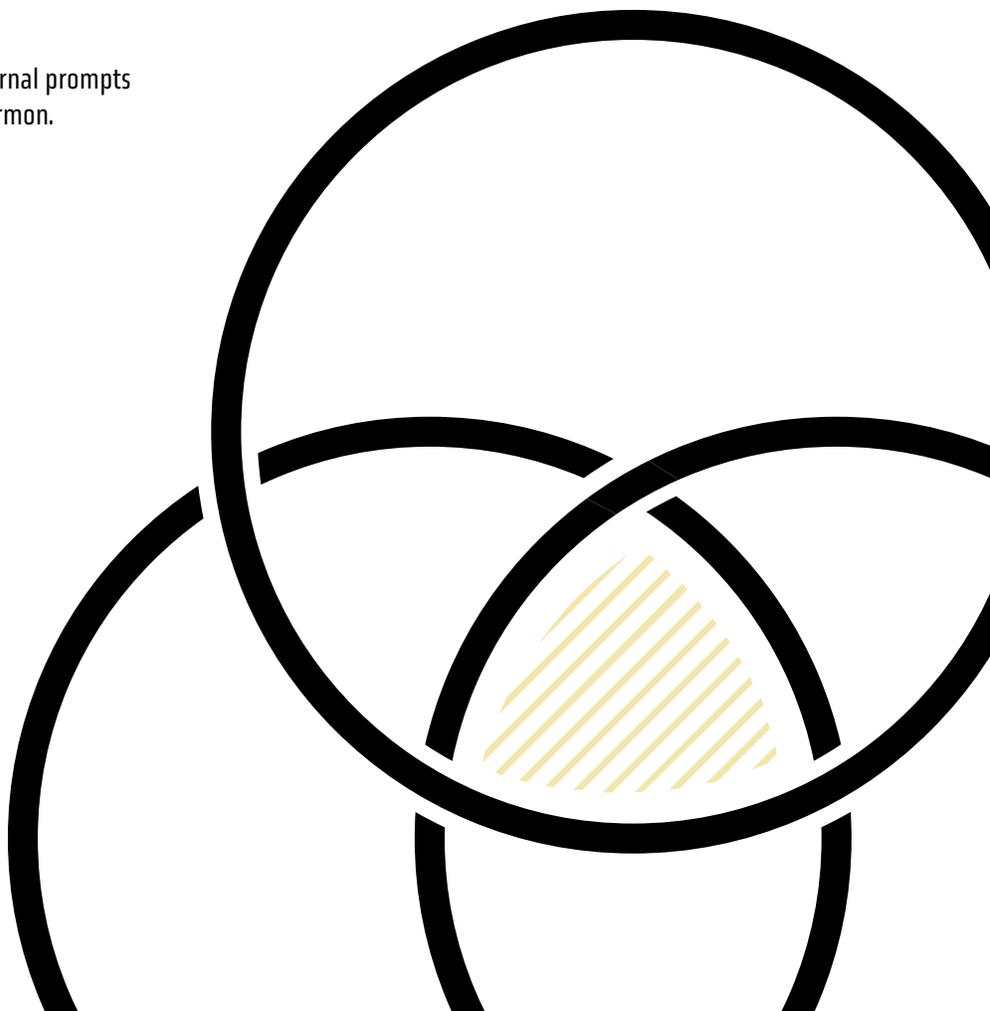
This is where you will be able to develop your individual chazown clearly as you go through each week.

5. RESOURCES FOR SMALL GROUPS

Help for Hosts

Small Group Guidelines

FAQs





WEEK 1

**FINDING YOUR
CHAZOWN**

Small Group Guide

SESSION ONE

INTRODUCTIONS:

Take time in this first session to introduce each other, share what you each hope to learn over the weeks to come, and establish expectations for your small group (see Resources for Small Group section at the end of your journal).

DISCUSSION QUESTION:

If money were no object, what would you do for the rest of your life?

WATCH SESSION ONE VIDEO



TheBayouChurch.org/Chazown

Why is God's Word foundational?

God's Word is our _____.

¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. ¹⁷ God uses it to prepare and equip His people to do every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Why should we journal?

Provides you a way to _____.

Deepens your own _____.

Prevents you from _____.

How should we journal?

Pray for _____ and _____.

Have a consistent _____.

HEAR Method

H _____
What verse(s) stood out to you in your reading?

E _____
What is the author's intended meaning in the context of the passage?

A _____
What is the principle to live by today?

R _____
How will I respond to the application in my relationships and/or situations this week?

SAMPLE HEAR JOURNAL:

Read: Philippians 4:13 (CSB)

Date: January 10, 2022

Title: Secret Of Contentment

H (Highlight) - "I am able to do all things through Him who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13

E (Explain) - Paul was telling the church at Philippi that he has discovered the secret of contentment. No matter the situation in Paul's life, he realized that Christ was all he needed, and Christ was the one who strengthened him to persevere through difficult times.

A (Apply) - In my life, I will experience many ups and downs. My contentment is not found in circumstances. Rather, it is based on my relationship with Jesus Christ. Only Jesus gives me the strength I need to be content in every circumstance of life.

R (Respond) - Lord Jesus, please help me as I strive to be content in You. Through Your strength, I can make it through any situation I face.

Putting It Into Practice

This week is all about taking each day to try the HEAR method. Practice highlighting, explaining, applying, and responding to God's Word this week. Be prepared to share what you're learning and experiencing with your small group next week.

ANSWER KEY:

highest authority, remember, faith, checking boxes, wisdom, understanding, plan, Highlight, Explain, Apply, Respond

DAILY JOURNAL



How do I log a HEAR journal?

Highlight

What verse(s) stood out to you in your reading?

The acronym, HEAR, stands for Highlight, Explain, Apply, and Respond. Each of these four steps contributes to creating an atmosphere to hear God speak. After establishing a time for studying God's Word, you will be ready to HEAR from God. Before reading each day's text, pause to sincerely ask God to speak to you. It is absolutely imperative that we seek God's guidance in order to understand His Word (1 Corinthians 2:12-14).

Every time we open our Bibles, we should pray the simple prayer that David prayed: "Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in Your instructions." (Psalm 119:18). This exercise will remind you to read with a purpose. In the course of your reading, one or two verses will usually stand out and speak to you. After reading the passage of Scripture, you will write out the name of the book, chapter, and verse numbers that speak to you along with writing out the verse or verses that you highlight.

Read the passage of Scripture on the following page and record your highlighted verse in the space provided.

DAILY JOURNAL

DAY 1

Psalm 139:13-16

¹³ You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴ Thank You for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.

¹⁵ You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb.

¹⁶ You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in Your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.

Highlight

How do I log a HEAR journal?

Explain

What is the author's intended meaning in the context of the passage?

After you have selected your highlighted passage in your HEAR journal, you will EXPLAIN what the text means. By asking some simple questions, with the help of God's Spirit, you can understand the meaning of a passage or verse. Here are a few questions to get you started:

- Why was this written?
- To whom was it originally written?
- How does it fit with the verses before and after it?
- Why did the Holy Spirit include this passage in the book?
- What is He intending to communicate through this text?

At this point, you are beginning the process of discovering the specific and personal word that God has for you from His Word. It is important that you engage with the text and wrestle with its meaning.

In order to help you see the bigger picture surrounding the daily Scripture, we suggest that you read the full chapter and use additional resources. These optional commentaries and online materials can provide additional insight to help explain the Scripture.

NLTLife Application Study Bible

The Believer's Bible Commentary

The Bible Project on YouTube

Read the passage of Scripture on the following page, record your highlight verse, and explain it in the space provided.

Ephesians 2:4-10

⁴ But God is so rich in mercy, and He loved us so much,

⁵ that even though we were dead because of our sins, He gave us life when He raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!)

⁶ For He raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus.

⁷ So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of His grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all He has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus.

⁸ God saved you by His grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God.

⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

¹⁰ For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things He planned for us long ago.

Highlight

Explain

How do I log a HEAR journal?

Apply

What is the principle to live by today?

After you have highlighted your verse from the passage and explained it, you will then write how you can APPLY it. This application is the heart of the process. Everything you have done so far culminates under this heading. As you have done before, answer a series of questions to uncover the significance of these verses to you personally, questions like:

- How can this help me?
- What does this mean today?
- What would the application of this verse look like in my life?
- What does this mean to me?
- What is God saying to me?

As you complete your HEAR journal, these questions bridge the gap between the ancient world and your world today. They provide a way for God to speak to you from a specific passage or verse. Challenge yourself to write between two and five sentences about how the text applies to your life.

Read the passage of Scripture on the following page, record your highlight verse, explain it, and write how you can apply it to your life in the space provided.

DAILY JOURNAL

DAY 3

1 Peter 2:9-11

⁹ But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for He called you out of the darkness into His wonderful light.

¹⁰ "Once you had no identity as a people; now you are God's people. Once you received no mercy; now you have received God's mercy."

¹¹ Dear friends, I warn you as "temporary residents and foreigners" to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls.

Highlight

Explain

Apply

How do I log a HEAR journal?

Respond

How will I respond to the application in my relationships and/or situations this week?

The last part of the HEAR journal is to RESPOND. Your response to the passage may take on many forms. You may write a call to action. You may describe how you will be different because of what God has said to you through His Word. You may indicate what you are going to do because of what you have learned. You may respond by writing out a prayer to God. For example, you may ask God to help you to be more loving, or to give you a desire to be more generous. Keep in mind that this is your response to what you have just read. Notice that all of the words in the HEAR journal formula are action words: Highlight, Explain, Apply, and Respond. God does not want us to sit back and wait for Him to drop some truth into our laps. Instead of waiting passively, God desires that we actively pursue Him. Jesus said, “Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you” (Matthew 7:7).

Think of the miracle of the Bible. Over centuries of time, God supernaturally moved upon a number of men in an unusual way that resulted in them writing the exact words of God. God led His people to recognize these divine writings and to distinguish them from everything else that has ever been written. Then God’s people brought these sixty-six books together. The preservation and survival of the Bible are as miraculous as its writing. Then God gave men, beginning with Gutenberg’s printing press, technological knowledge to copy and transmit the Bible so that all people could have it. All because God has something to say to you.

Read the passage of Scripture on the following page. Highlight, explain, apply, and write a response in the provided space.

DAILY JOURNAL

DAY 4

Jeremiah 1:4-8

⁴ The Lord gave me this message:

⁵ “I knew you before I formed you in your mother’s womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations.”

⁶ “O Sovereign Lord,” I said, “I can’t speak for You! I’m too young!”

⁷ The Lord replied, “Don’t say, ‘I’m too young,’ for you must go wherever I send you and say whatever I tell you. ⁸ And don’t be afraid of the people, for I will be with you and will protect you. I, the Lord, have spoken!”

Highlight

Explain

Apply

Respond

Acts 20:16-24

¹⁶ Paul had decided to sail on past Ephesus, for he didn't want to spend any more time in the province of Asia. He was hurrying to get to Jerusalem, if possible, in time for the Festival of Pentecost.

¹⁷ But when we landed at Miletus, he sent a message to the elders of the church at Ephesus, asking them to come and meet him.

¹⁸ When they arrived he declared, "You know that from the day I set foot in the province of Asia until now ¹⁹ I have done the Lord's work humbly and with many tears. I have endured the trials that came to me from the plots of the Jews. ²⁰ I never shrank back from telling you what you needed to hear, either publicly or in your homes. ²¹ I have had one message for Jews and Greeks alike—the necessity of repenting from sin and turning to God, and of having faith in our Lord Jesus.

²² "And now I am bound by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem. I don't know what awaits me, ²³ except that the Holy Spirit tells me in city after city that jail and suffering lie ahead. ²⁴ But my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God."

DAILY JOURNAL

DAY 5

Highlight

Explain

Apply

Respond

The background is a solid teal color. A vertical black bar is positioned in the upper center. Below it, the text 'WEEK 2' is written in yellow. Further down, the text 'YOUR PAST EXPERIENCES' is written in white. The background is decorated with several overlapping, semi-transparent teal circles of varying sizes, creating a layered effect.

WEEK 2

**YOUR PAST
EXPERIENCES**

Small Group Guide

SESSION TWO

WEEKLY CHECK IN:

1. Take time to discuss the HEAR method. Which part comes most naturally to you? Which part seems most intimidating and why?
2. Take 15-20 minutes to share HEAR journals from last week. As you share, a great question to ask is, "Which of your HEAR journals stood out the most and what are you doing about it?"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In his book titled *Chazown*, Pastor Craig Groeschel says, "Your past often holds the key to unlock your future." What do you think that means? How do you see that being true in your own life?
2. Have you ever asked God to give you the eyes to see the value in your experiences, past or present? How might your view of those experiences change if you ask Him to show you the meaning and purpose?
3. Read Romans 8:28. What's it like for you to look back and see the ways that God was using your experiences? What's it like to think about your present situation and know that He is currently at work? Which of these is more difficult for you and why?



Putting It Into Practice

This week is all about your past experiences, both positive and negative. You're going to take two days this week to reflect and sort through your past experiences to allow God to reveal how He wants to use those times to help you discover and live out your Chazown. You will continue using the HEAR method to journal the other three days this week. Be prepared to share what you're learning and experiencing with your small group next week.

Before jumping into your daily journals this week, take time to write out a prayer to God in the space provided below asking Him for His help, guidance, and love as you take time to reflect this week.

DAILY JOURNAL



1 Peter 5:6-10

⁶So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time He will lift you up in honor. ⁷Give all your worries and cares to God, for He cares about you.

⁸Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. ⁹Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family of believers all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are.

¹⁰In His kindness God called you to share in His eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus. So after you have suffered a little while, He will restore, support, and strengthen you, and He will place you on a firm foundation. ¹¹All power to Him forever! Amen.

DAILY JOURNAL

DAY 1

Highlight

Explain

Apply

Respond

Discover Your Chazown

PREPARE YOUR HEART

The apostle Paul tells us in Romans 8:28 that “we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them.”

Spend a minute or two asking God to bring to your mind key experiences and individuals in your life. Take time to jot down all that you can think of, both big and small, positive or negative on the next page. You don't have to write out the details, a word or phrase that represents that experience is fine. Once you have written them all down on the next page, go back and indicate whether it's positive or negative.

DAILY JOURNAL

DAY 2

PAST EXPERIENCES TIMELINE

Romans 5:1-5

¹ Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. ² Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory.

³ We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. ⁴ And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. ⁵ And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because He has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with His love.

DAILY JOURNAL

DAY 3

Highlight

Explain

Apply

Respond

Discover Your Chazown

PREPARE YOUR HEART

In Genesis 50:20, David tells his brothers that, “You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people.” Remember that God wants to use all parts of our lives for His glory and our good.

Take a few minutes and review your past experiences from Day 2 on page 29. Ask yourself the following questions to help you identify life lessons that you learned from them.

Group your past experiences into three to six categories and list them in the columns on the top on the next page. Write out the life lessons from those categories underneath, and then transfer the most impactful ones to the appropriate section on page 106.

- What was God trying to teach me during this chapter or turning point of my life?
- What should I remember as I move forward?
- What abilities or insights has God deposited into my life as a result of this experience?
- In what ways can the skills or insights God gave me through this experience impact my future?
- What character traits did I develop as a result of this experience?
- What character traits have I come to value most in others?
- Are there any unique experiences or insights I’ve gained?
- What are some of the ways God has used me?
- Did this experience reveal anything to me about what God is like?

DAILY JOURNAL

DAY 4

PAST EXPERIENCES TIMELINE - PART 2

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

James 1:12-18

¹² God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him. ¹³ And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, “God is tempting me.” God is never tempted to do wrong, and He never tempts anyone else. ¹⁴ Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. ¹⁵ These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.

¹⁶ So don't be misled, my dear brothers and sisters. ¹⁷ Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. ¹⁸ He chose to give birth to us by giving us His true Word. And we, out of all creation, became His prized possession.

DAILY JOURNAL

DAY 5

Highlight

Explain

Apply

Respond



WEEK 3

**YOUR CORE
VALUES AND
SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

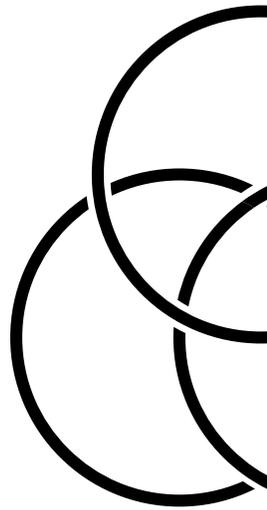
WEEKLY CHECK IN:

1. Take 15–20 minutes to share HEAR journals from last week. As you share, a great question to ask is, “Which of your HEAR journals stood out the most and what are you doing about it?”
2. What was it like for you to reflect on your past experiences? What are you grateful for now that maybe you weren’t grateful for in the moment?
3. What is God showing you about your future through your past?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What do you cherish at your core? How much does what you cherish direct how you are investing your time and energy these days?

2. Read Matthew 21:12–13. Jesus expressed emotion and passion. What did His response in this passage show about His character? What makes you angry? What brings you bliss? What do your answers show you about yourself that you may not be taking seriously enough?



Putting It Into Practice

This week is about your core values and spiritual gifts. You're going to take two days this week to help you determine your core values and spiritual gifts in order to help you discover your Chazown. You will continue using the HEAR method to journal the other three days this week. Be prepared to share what you're learning and experiencing with your small group next week.

As you reflect on your core values this week, consider asking a close friend or loved one what they would say your character traits are because that oftentimes can help reveal what you value.

DAILY JOURNAL



Matthew 21:12-16

¹² Jesus entered the Temple and began to drive out all the people buying and selling animals for sacrifice. He knocked over the tables of the money changers and the chairs of those selling doves. ¹³ He said to them, “The Scriptures declare, ‘My Temple will be called a house of prayer,’ but you have turned it into a den of thieves!” ¹⁴ The blind and the lame came to him in the Temple, and He healed them. ¹⁵ The leading priests and the teachers of religious law saw these wonderful miracles and heard even the children in the Temple shouting, “Praise God for the Son of David.”

But the leaders were indignant. ¹⁶ They asked Jesus, “Do you hear what these children are saying?” “Yes,” Jesus replied. “Haven’t you ever read the Scriptures? For they say, ‘You have taught children and infants to give you praise.’”

DAILY JOURNAL

DAY 1

Highlight

Explain

Apply

Respond

Discover Your Chazown

PREPARE YOUR HEART

Throughout Scripture God reveals values to us that are important such as the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22, which are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Spend a minute or two asking God to help you identify your core values. Then, take time to go through the list of values and select the ones that you feel apply to you. There is space at the end to add others that come to mind and consider these questions as you reflect.

- What stirs up righteous anger inside of you? (What breaks your heart?)
- What brings you the most happiness or joy?
- When you look at your personal timeline, what core values do you see revealed in it?

Once you have selected the values that apply to you, reflect on these questions to narrow them down to 3-5 and write them in the core values circle on your My Chazown diagram on page 106.

- Which core values do you see reflected in your past experiences?
- Which of these values have you displayed recently?
- Which values would others say are true of you?

DAILY JOURNAL

DAY 2

CORE VALUES

Accountability	Evangelism	Innovation	Proactive	Unity
Attitude	Excellence	Integrity	Punctual	Wisdom
Authenticity	Faith	Intimacy	Purity	Worship
Beatification	Faithfulness	Joy	Relationships	Zeal
Boldness	Family	Justice	Reliability	_____
Character	Fellowship	Kindness	Respect	_____
Collaboration	Finances	Knowing God	Responsibility	_____
Communication	Fitness	Leadership	Sacrifice	_____
Community	Generosity	Learning	Safety	_____
Confidence	Gentleness	Living in the Moment	Self-control	_____
Courage	Godliness	Logic	Self-discipline	_____
Creativity	Goodness	Loyalty	Selflessness	_____
Dedication	Grace	Mercy	Servant Leadership	_____
Devotion	Gratefulness	Obedience	Serving	_____
Discipleship	Growth	Openness	Steadfastness	_____
Discipline	Hard work	Optimism	Stewardship	_____
Discovery	Health	Order	Submission	
Diversity	Honesty	Passion	Teachability	
Education	Honor	Patience	Teamwork	
Efficiency	Hope	Peace	Thankfulness	
Encouragement	Humility	Perseverance	Thoughtfulness	
Endurance	Humor	Personal Growth	Transparency	
Enthusiasm	Improvement	Prayer	Truth	

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

⁴There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. ⁵There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. ⁶God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.

⁷A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. ⁸To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. ⁹The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. ¹⁰He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another Spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. ¹¹It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.

DAILY JOURNAL

DAY 3

Highlight

Explain

Apply

Respond

Discover Your Chazown

PREPARE YOUR HEART

Romans 12:6 tells us that in His grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. Spiritual gifts promote the common good of the body of Christ, build up the church, and prepare us each for works of service. Each person upon accepting the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ receives the Holy Spirit inside as a seal of salvation. The Spirit then gives to each believer certain unique gifts from God to do the work of God.

The gifts God gives us through His Spirit are to be used for His glory. We should also take care of and develop the gifts God has given us so that they honor God and love people. What's most important is to be prayerfully serving the Lord. The gifts of the Spirit will be confirmed as we spend more time with God and seek His purpose for our lives.

God made you for a purpose.

¹³You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴ Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.

Psalm 139:13-14

God gives you unique spiritual gifts.

⁴There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. ⁵There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. ⁶God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. ⁷A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Take time today to review the spiritual gifts on the following pages. Determine what three to five spiritual gifts resonate most with you and write them in the spiritual gifts circle on your My Chazown diagram on page 106.

To help identify your spiritual gifts, keep in mind the answers to these questions:

- What do I enjoy doing the most?
- What do I do that seems to have the most impact on other people?
- What do I secretly believe I can do, but I've just never tried?
- What's something other people tell me I'm good at?

Additionally, consider taking our spiritual gifts assessment by scanning the QR code. You will enter your name and email address in order to receive the results of your top three spiritual gifts.



UNDERSTAND YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Administration

The gift of administration is the divine strength or ability to organize multiple tasks and groups of people to accomplish these tasks.

Luke 14:28-30, Acts 6:1-7, 1 Corinthians 12:28

Discernment

The gift of discernment is the divine strength or ability to spiritually identify falsehood and to distinguish between right and wrong motives and situations.

Matthew 16:21-23, Acts 5:1-11, Acts 16:16-18, 1 Corinthians 12:10, 1 John 4:1-6

Encouragement

The gift of encouragement is the divine strength or ability to encourage others through the written or spoken Word and biblical truth.

Acts 14:22, Romans 12:8, 1 Timothy 4:13, Hebrews 10:24-25

Evangelism

The gift of evangelism is the divine strength or ability to help non-Christians take the necessary steps to becoming Christ-followers.

Acts 8:5-6, Acts 8:26-40, Acts 14:21, Acts 21:8, Ephesians 4:11-14

Giving

The gift of giving is the divine strength or ability to produce wealth and to give by tithes and offerings for the purpose of advancing the kingdom of God on Earth.

Mark 12:41-44, Romans 12:8, 2 Corinthians 8:1-7, 1 Corinthians 9:2-7

Hospitality

The gift of hospitality is the divine strength or ability to create warm, welcoming environments for others in places such as your home, office, or church.

Acts 16:14-15, Romans 12:13, Romans 16:23, Hebrews 13:1-2, 1 Peter 4:9

Intercession

The gift of intercession is the divine strength or ability to stand in the gap in prayer for someone or something, believing for profound results.

Hebrews 7:25, Colossians 1:9-12, Colossians 4:12-13, James 5:14-16

Knowledge

The gift of knowledge is the divine strength or ability to understand and to bring clarity to situations and circumstances often accompanied by a word from God.

Acts 5:1-11, 1 Corinthians 12:8, Colossians 2:2-3

Leadership

The gift of leadership is the divine strength or ability to influence people at their level while directing and focusing them on the big picture, vision, or idea.

Romans 12:8, 1 Timothy 3:1-13, 1 Timothy 5:17,
Hebrews 13:17

Mercy

The gift of mercy is the divine strength or ability to feel empathy and to care for those who are hurting in any way.

Matthew 9:35-36, Mark 9:41, Romans 12:8,
1 Thessalonians 5:14

Service

The gift of serving is the divine strength or ability to do small or great tasks in working for the overall good of the body of Christ.

Acts 6:1-7, Romans 12:7, Galatians 6:10,
1 Timothy 1:16-18, Titus 3:14

Shepherding

The gift of shepherding is the divine strength or ability to care for the personal needs of others by nurturing and mending life issues

John 10:1-18, Ephesians 4:11-14,
1 Timothy 3:1-7, 1 Peter 5:1-3

Teaching

The gift of teaching is the divine strength or ability to study and learn from the Scriptures primarily to bring understanding and growth to other Christians.

Acts 18:24-28, Acts 20:20-21, 1 Corinthians 12:28,
Ephesians 4:11-14

Wisdom

The gift of wisdom is the divine strength or ability to apply the truths of Scripture in a practical way, producing a fruitful outcome and the character of Jesus Christ.

Acts 6:3, 10, 1 Corinthians 2:6-13,
1 Corinthians 12:8

Write your three to five spiritual gifts in the spiritual gifts circle on your My Chazown diagram on page 106.

1 Peter 4:10-11

¹⁰ God has given each of you a gift from His great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. ¹¹ Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God Himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to Him forever and ever! Amen.

DAILY JOURNAL

DAY 5

Highlight

Explain

Apply

Respond

The background is a solid blue color. In the center, there is a vertical black bar. Behind the bar and text, there are several overlapping, light blue circular outlines. The text 'WEEK 4' is centered within the black bar.

WEEK 4

**YOUR PURPOSE
STATEMENT**

Small Group Guide

SESSION FOUR

WEEKLY CHECK IN:

1. Take 15–20 minutes to share HEAR journals from last week. As you share, a great question to ask is, “Which of your HEAR journals stood out the most and what are you doing about it?”
2. Our claimed values and practiced values aren’t always the same. As you were going through the core values activity, did you notice any values you claimed were important but realized that you aren’t actually practicing?
3. When you were going through your spiritual gifts assessment last week, did the results of the online assessment surprise you? Which of your spiritual gifts have the greatest opportunity to stretch and grow you in this season of your life?
4. What did God show you as you thought about your core values and spiritual gifts?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Do you have some type of plan or direction for your life or are you mostly going “wherever the wind blows”? Share any examples of plans that have been helpful in your life.
2. Read Psalm 32:8–9. When God gives you His vision for your life, it is just that, a God-sized vision. It will only be accomplished by faith and trusting that He will help you complete it. What stands out to you in this passage? What’s difficult about trusting God’s path for your life?



Putting It Into Practice

This week is about the one sentence version of God's Chazown for your life. You're going to take two days this week to brainstorm and craft your purpose statement. You will continue using the HEAR method to journal the other three days this week. Be prepared to share what you're learning and experiencing with your small group next week.

As you prepare to write your purpose statement, spend some time asking God to remove any fear or doubt you may have and replace it with excitement and a clear focus to hear from Him.

DAILY JOURNAL



Philippians 2:12-16

¹² Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important. Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. ¹³ For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases Him.

¹⁴ Do everything without complaining and arguing, ¹⁵ so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people. ¹⁶ Hold firmly to the word of life; then, on the day of Christ's return, I will be proud that I did not run the race in vain and that my work was not useless.

DAILY JOURNAL

DAY 1

Highlight

Explain

Apply

Respond

Jeremiah 33:1-9

¹ While Jeremiah was still confined in the courtyard of the guard, the Lord gave him this second message: ² “This is what the Lord says—the Lord who made the earth, who formed and established it, whose name is the Lord: ³ Ask me and I will tell you remarkable secrets you do not know about things to come. ⁴ For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: You have torn down the houses of this city and even the king’s palace to get materials to strengthen the walls against the siege ramps and swords of the enemy. ⁵ You expect to fight the Babylonians, but the men of this city are already as good as dead, for I have determined to destroy them in my terrible anger. I have abandoned them because of all their wickedness.

⁶ “Nevertheless, the time will come when I will heal Jerusalem’s wounds and give it prosperity and true peace. ⁷ I will restore the fortunes of Judah and Israel and rebuild their towns. ⁸ I will cleanse them of their sins against Me and forgive all their sins of rebellion. ⁹ Then this city will bring Me joy, glory, and honor before all the nations of the earth! The people of the world will see all the good I do for My people, and they will tremble with awe at the peace and prosperity I provide for them.”

DAILY JOURNAL

DAY 3

Highlight

Explain

Apply

Respond

Discover Your Chazown

PREPARE YOUR HEART

The Lord tells us in Psalm 32:8 that He will guide us along the best path for our lives. On the next page, you'll work on your purpose statement, which will be used to guide you in the future as you live out your Chazown. Try using this formula to complete your purpose statement:

Action + Who + How = Chazown

Here are some examples of words and phrases you can use to create your formula. Don't feel boxed in—there are endless options because God created each of us uniquely with an individual purpose, but here are just a few words to jumpstart your thinking!

Actions	Who	How
Encourage	Children	Leading
Foster	Men	Creating
Develop	Single moms	Providing
Teach	Families	Reconciling
Use my talent	The suffering	Modeling

Keep these things in mind as you write your purpose statement:

1. Your Chazown will probably seem kind of broad at first.
2. Don't feel like your Chazown has to be perfect on your first try.
3. Your Chazown can be anything.
4. Your Chazown isn't going to write itself. Just go for it!

Here are some examples of purpose statements that might help you in writing yours:

- To foster relationships among men by creating opportunities for them to connect in the wilderness.
- To develop strong families by modeling the biblical example of home life for foster children.
- To passionately encourage others to recognize the gifts that God has given them, so they believe in themselves.

DAILY JOURNAL

DAY 4

PURPOSE STATEMENT - PART 2

Use this space to draft and brainstorm. Then, refine it into one sentence below.

Write your purpose statement in one sentence.

Joshua 1:5-9

⁵ No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. For I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you. ⁶ “Be strong and courageous, for you are the one who will lead these people to possess all the land I swore to their ancestors I would give them. ⁷ Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the instructions Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning either to the right or to the left. Then you will be successful in everything you do. ⁸ Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do. ⁹ This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

DAILY JOURNAL

DAY 5

Highlight

Explain

Apply

Respond



WEEK 5

**YOUR FIVE
SPOKES**

Small Group Guide

SESSION FIVE

WEEKLY CHECK IN:

1. Take 15–20 minutes to share HEAR journals from last week. As you share, a great question to ask is, “Which of your HEAR journals stood out the most and what are you doing about it?”
2. Last week you arrived at your sweet spot—where the circles of your past experiences, core values, and spiritual gifts overlap. Did you experience a personal breakthrough here, or are you still processing?
3. Share with each other what dream God placed inside of you, whether it’s your specific purpose statement or the general idea you’re still working on.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

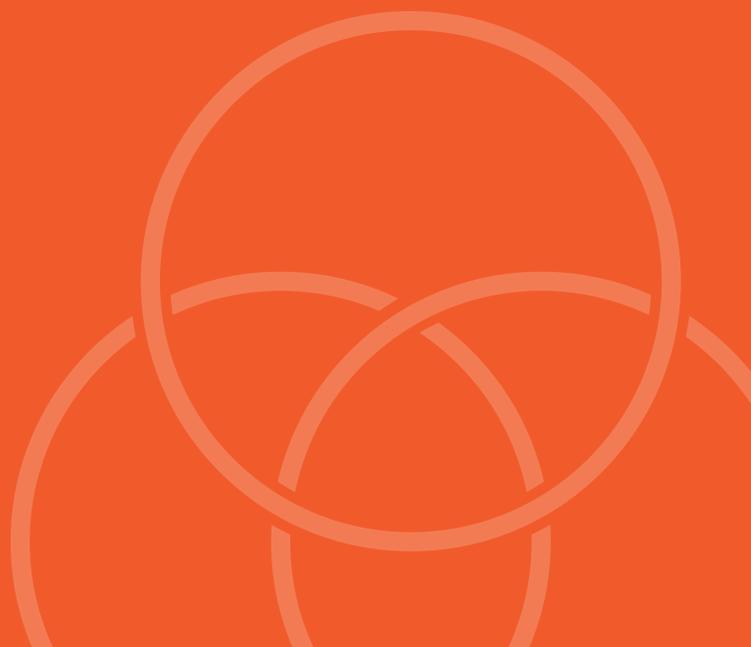
1. Have you ever taken a big picture look at the major areas of your life and considered how they need to all work together? Which of the areas—or spokes (God, people, finances, work, health)—do you feel might need the most work? Why?
2. Read Proverbs 3:5–6. The spoke that ultimately affects all of the other spokes is your relationship with God. Describe your relationship with God. When have you been the closest with Him and what did that look like? What is it that you need to do in order to grow in this area?



Putting It Into Practice

In order for you to live out your Chazown well, all of your spokes must be healthy. This week, we'll focus on the fundamental spokes (the small c's) that support your big C Chazown by taking a pulse check of how healthy each spoke is and ways we can grow where needed.

DAILY JOURNAL



James 4:4-8

⁴You adulterers! Don't you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God. ⁵Do you think the Scriptures have no meaning? They say that God is passionate that the Spirit He has placed within us should be faithful to Him. ⁶And He gives grace generously. As the Scriptures say,

**“God opposes the proud
but gives grace to the humble.”**

⁷So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world.

DAILY JOURNAL

DAY 1

Highlight

Explain

Apply

Respond

Discover Your Chazown

PREPARE YOUR HEART

In Matthew 25:29, God tells us that He gives an abundance to those who are responsible for what He has given them to steward and lead. In order to achieve long-term success with your Chazown, there are five fundamental areas of life to pay attention to and to lead well.

Evaluate how you are doing in these five areas by reviewing the statements under each spoke on the next page. Indicate which statements are true for you.

FIVE SPOKES SELF-INVENTORY

Your Relationship with God

- I usually feel distant from God.
- I don't spend much time praying or reading the Bible.
- I'm inconsistent in my relationship with God.
- I struggle with doubts about God.
- I am not involved in a church. (attending occasionally is not being involved)

Your Relationships with People

- I am in one or more painful or destructive relationships.
- I often feel lonely.
- In few (or none) of my relationships am I helping others draw closer to Christ, nor are they doing that for me.
- I do not have a mentor.
- I fear intimacy.

FIVE SPOKES SELF-INVENTORY

Your Financial Life

- I carry credit card balances from month to month.
- I feel financially hindered from doing some things God wants me to do.
- I'm often worried about finances.
- If I didn't have an income for one month, I couldn't pay my bills.
- I'm not tithing 10 percent of my income to God.

Your Physical Health

- I'm often tired and worn down.
- I struggle with sexual promiscuity, smoking, or substance abuse.
- I haven't had a physical in years.
- I don't exercise regularly.
- I struggle with a mental illness or have an unhealthy thought life.
- I think the four basic food groups are Taco Bell, McDonald's, Wendy's, and KFC.

Your Life's Work

(Including your volunteer service and raising a family)

- I feel little or no passion about my work.
- I dream about doing something different.
- I don't think my work has much, if anything, to do with God.
- My gifts and passions are underutilized.
- I don't have a clue what I need to do with this part of my life.

The categories in which you identify with the most statements are the ones you might consider giving priority attention. Pray about your decision first, and go the direction God wants you to go. We will look further into your priority areas on Day 4 of this week.

Colossians 3:23-25

²³ Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. ²⁴ Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ. ²⁵ But if you do what is wrong, you will be paid back for the wrong you have done. For God has no favorites.

DAILY JOURNAL

DAY 3

Highlight

Explain

Apply

Respond

Discover Your Chazown

PREPARE YOUR HEART

The truth is, we will not drift into becoming people who plan. It will take prayer, work, and trial. Allow God to move in and through your plans. Like the writer of Proverbs 16:3 says, commit it to the Lord. Since you established the spokes that need your attention on Day 2 of this week, we are going to focus time on growing in those areas.

Feel free to jump to the sections that most apply to you or work through them all. In each section, take time to reflect on the importance of that area in your life and take time to answer the associated questions.

QUESTIONS FOR GROWTH

Relationship with God

The way you learn to utilize something and achieve the best results is to either ask the creator or read the instruction manual. Similarly, as we seek to understand what purpose our creator designed us for, we must look to Him for the answer. God desires for us to seek His guidance in our lives, and in order to best hear His response we must build a personal relationship with Him.

Ultimately, this spoke is the one that affects all of the others. If this one is not as strong as it needs to be, all of the other spokes cannot fully function in the way that God designed them to.

It's hard to fully comprehend our Chazown when our relationship with God is not what it needs to be. You can begin to grow closer to God by reading the Bible daily, praying daily, and meeting together with other followers of Christ. There is no better time to start than today!

Here are some questions that will help you as you aim to move closer to God.

1. Which disciplines best help me experience God? (What has previously brought you close to God? What is something you've never done that might help you draw closer to Him?) How can I put things into practice to experience Him more in those ways?

2. What barriers are hindering me from experiencing God? What do I need to remove or put aside to allow me the opportunity to experience Him? (What are you spending your time and resources on in place of God? What sin needs to be removed?)

QUESTIONS FOR GROWTH

Relationship with People

God came so that we may have a full life. Part of experiencing that full life is through great relationships with people. It's within the context of relationships that we receive encouragement, support, accountability, and help. These relationships can also bring us joy and fulfill our Chazown. Ask God to direct your relationships. Thank Him for the courage and commitment to handle those relationships with purpose.

Here are some questions that will help you as you focus on improving your relationships with people.

1. What relationship needs to be initiated? (To fulfill our Chazown, we need others to encourage us, teach us, or hold us accountable. Who might God want to add to your team to help you achieve His plan for your life? Ask God to show you who might be missing, and then go seek them out!)
2. What relationship needs to be nurtured? (If we're only operating out of our selfish nature our relationships will not grow the way God intended them to. We must intentionally lay down our life in order to serve and love others the way that Christ loves us.)
3. What relationship needs to be restored? (Certain relationships might seem beyond hope, but our God can do the impossible! Who might you need to forgive or seek forgiveness from?)
4. What relationship needs to be severed? (Do you have someone who is leading you away from God rather than closer to Him?)

QUESTIONS FOR GROWTH

Finances

God ultimately wants our hearts and not our money. The way that we manage our money often tells whether we're ultimately living for what we want or what God wants for us. The wise use of our finances is so important as we seek to live out the purpose God has created for each of us. We cannot use the resources that we've been given to help fulfill our Chazown if we're indebted to others.

Here are some questions that will help you as you take a look at your finances.

1. What is your financial vision? (Start by looking at your core values and define your financial vision according to the values God has given you, not what others want to impose on you. What is most important? Does your spending line up with that? Your financial choices should be consistent with your values.)

2. What is your financial plan that will enable you to get to your financial vision? (Do you already know what to do and just need to implement it, or do you need to start by learning about the basics of money management? Do you need to seek financial advice to help you maintain a budget or consider other factors like insurance, retirement, etc.?)

There are three suggested areas within your finances that you should intentionally seek God's vision and establish an action plan. They are giving, debt elimination, and the future.

QUESTIONS FOR GROWTH

Work

God created us and had good works prepared in advance for us to do. The ability to work is a blessing, and we are designed to honor Him through it. Work is considered what you do with your productive, waking hours. This work may be inside or outside of your home, as a student, a dedicated volunteer, or something else entirely. For some people, your life's work is the same as your work life. For others, the two are completely different. Whatever your situation, without a purpose for your work, God's gift of time is likely to turn into one big exercise in gritting your teeth.

Here are some questions that will help you as you set your sights on what God wants in your work.

1. Are you happy to get started on your work each day? How do you feel at the end of the day? What aspects of your work make you feel this way?

2. For this season of your life, are you doing the work God wants you to do? (If yes, celebrate! Then, ask God what you should do to elevate it to the next level. If you aren't sure, it may be more about who you can influence by your faith and attitude instead of the tasks you're completing.)

Galatians 5:13-18

¹³ For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love. ¹⁴ For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁵ But if you are always biting and devouring one another, watch out! Beware of destroying one another.

¹⁶ So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. ¹⁷ The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions. ¹⁸ But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses.

DAILY JOURNAL

DAY 5

Highlight

Explain

Apply

Respond



WEEK 6

**LIVING YOUR
CHAZOWN**

Small Group Guide

SESSION SIX

WEEKLY CHECK IN:

1. Take 15–20 minutes to share HEAR journals from last week. As you share, a great question to ask is, “Which of your HEAR journals stood out the most and what are you doing about it?”
2. As you wrapped up your exploration of the Three Circles and Five Spokes of your Chazown, how are you feeling: overwhelmed or energized? fearful or confident? cautious or optimistic? confused or clear-minded?

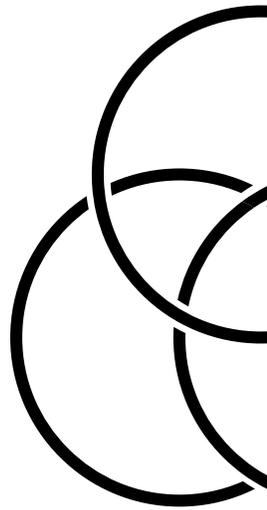
WATCH SESSION SIX VIDEO



TheBayouChurch.org/Chazown

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. When it comes to writing out the specifics of a goal and an action plan to achieve that goal, plenty of people find themselves getting anxious, doubtful, or overcome by a desire to delay. How do you normally feel when you plan and set goals? Why do you think that is?
2. Until now, have you thought that your success was all up to you, or have you operated intentionally with support and accountability? Talk about the practical, specific steps you can take to gather a team of people to help you fulfill your Chazown. If you already have a team, share how they help you stay focused on the most important things.
3. How are you feeling now about pursuing your life’s purpose with passion? What little actions will be different today as a result? What outcomes can you expect, by your effort and God’s grace, to be different in the future?



Putting It Into Practice

This week is all about moving from discovery to setting actionable goals. You're going to take two days this week to reflect and sort through what's most important and where God wants you to grow. You will continue using the HEAR method to journal the other three days this week.

Before jumping into your daily journals this week, take time to write out a prayer to God in the space provided below. Thank Him for what He's teaching you, how He's blessing you, and ask Him for His help as you set goals this week that honor Him.

DAILY JOURNAL



Proverbs 16:1-3

¹ We can make our own plans, but the Lord gives the right answer.

² People may be pure in their own eyes, but the Lord examines their motives.

³ Commit your actions to the Lord, and your plans will succeed.

DAILY JOURNAL

DAY 1

Highlight

Explain

Apply

Respond

Discover Your Chazown

PREPARE YOUR HEART

Wisely setting goals leads to better results as Proverbs 21:5 tells us that good planning and hard work lead to prosperity. Just like any other lifestyle choice, fulfilling your Chazown is a decision you must make each day. Seemingly small choices in each area of your life can impact your overall effectiveness.

Consider the following questions to help determine your next steps to consistently living out your Chazown. On Day 4 of this week you will write out specific goals based on your answers.

DAILY JOURNAL

DAY 2

NEXT STEPS - PART 1

1. What can I do to keep my Chazown in front of me all the time?
2. What obstacles am I likely to run into?
3. Which spoke should I focus on growing first?
4. Where do I need to create margin in my life?
5. What new skills or relationships do I need to seek out?

Colossians 1:6-12

⁶This same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world. It is bearing fruit everywhere by changing lives, just as it changed your lives from the day you first heard and understood the truth about God's wonderful grace.

⁷You learned about the Good News from Epaphras, our beloved co-worker. He is Christ's faithful servant, and he is helping us on your behalf. ⁸He has told us about the love for others that the Holy Spirit has given you.

⁹So we have not stopped praying for you since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you complete knowledge of His will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. ¹⁰Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better.

¹¹We also pray that you will be strengthened with all His glorious power so you will have all the endurance and patience you need. May you be filled with joy, ¹²always thanking the Father. He has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to His people, who live in the light.

DAILY JOURNAL

DAY 3

Highlight

Explain

Apply

Respond

Discover Your Chazown

PREPARE YOUR HEART

Depending on which spoke you are working on, determine what type of accountability partner works best for you. God's Word tells us in Proverbs 27:17 that as iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend. If you would be more successful by having a partner who is in your circle, consider a close friend or small group member who will be able to speak the truth when you need it and bring accountability to your life. If you would be more successful with someone who is an expert in that field, perhaps seek out a fitness coach, counselor, financial planner, or pastor.

Set SMART Goals for Your Next Steps

Specific: Have you narrowed your focus?

Measurable: Can you measure your goals?

Attainable: Is the goal realistic?

Relevant: Is this the best place for you to focus right now?

Time-bound: When will you have your goal completed?

Write one SMART goal for each step, the amount of time you think it will take to complete your goal, and who will hold you accountable. If you haven't finished any of the "Discover Your Chazown" days in this journal, let that be one of your goals.

NEXT STEPS - PART 2

Step One

Goal:

Time to complete: _____

Accountability Partner: _____

Very next thing I'm going to do:

Step Two

Goal:

Time to complete: _____

Accountability Partner: _____

Very next thing I'm going to do:

Step Three

Goal:

Time to complete: _____

Accountability Partner: _____

Very next thing I'm going to do:

Ephesians 3:14-21

¹⁴When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, ¹⁵the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. ¹⁶I pray that from His glorious, unlimited resources He will empower you with inner strength through His Spirit. ¹⁷Then Christ will make His home in your hearts as you trust in Him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. ¹⁸And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep His love is. ¹⁹May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

²⁰Now all glory to God, who is able, through His mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. ²¹Glory to Him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.

DAILY JOURNAL

DAY 5

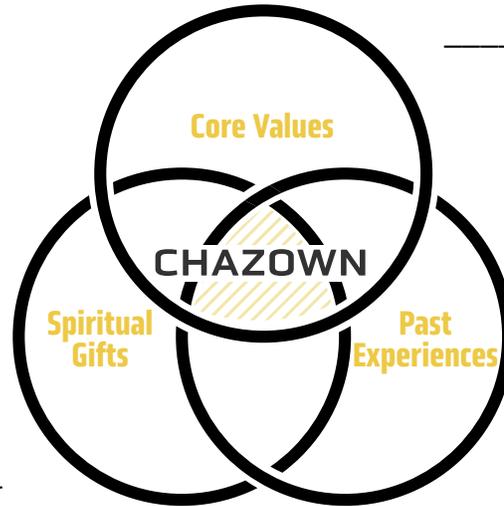
Highlight

Explain

Apply

Respond

Core Values



Spiritual Gifts

Past Experiences

Purpose Statement:

SMALL GROUP

RESOURCES

Small Group Resources

HELP FOR HOSTS

Congratulations! As the host of your small group, you have responded to the call to help people Know God, Find Community, and Make a Difference. As you prepare to facilitate your group, here are a few thoughts to keep in mind.

Remember you are not alone. God knows everything about you and He knew you would be asked to facilitate your group. You may not feel ready; this is common. God promises, “I will never abandon you” (Hebrews 13:5 NCV). Whether you’re facilitating for one evening, several weeks, or a lifetime, you will be blessed as you serve.

Top 10 Tips for New Hosts

1. Don't try to do it alone. Pray right now for God to help you build a healthy team. If you can enlist a co-host to help, that can sometimes make for a greater experience. This is your chance to involve as many people as you can in building a healthy group. All you have to do is ask people to help you. You'll be surprised at the response.
2. Be friendly and be yourself. God wants to use your unique gifts and temperament. Be sure to greet people at the door with a big smile—this can set the mood for the whole gathering. Remember, they are taking as big of a step showing up for this study as you are hosting a small group! Don't try to do things exactly like another host; do them in a way that fits you. Admit when you don't have an answer and apologize when you make a mistake. Your group will love you for it!
3. Prepare for your meeting ahead of time. Review the session and write down your responses to each question.
4. Pray for your group members by name. Before your group arrives, take a few moments and pray for each member by name. Ask God to use your time together to touch the heart of each person in your group. Expect God to lead you to whomever He wants you to encourage or challenge in a special way. If you listen, God will surely lead.
5. When you ask a question, be patient. Someone will eventually respond. Sometimes people need a moment or two of silence to think about the questions. After someone responds, affirm the response with a simple “thanks” or “great answer.”

Then ask, “How about somebody else?” or “Would someone who hasn’t shared like to add anything?” Be sensitive to new people or reluctant members who aren’t ready to say, pray or do anything. If you give them a safe setting, they will blossom over time.

6. Provide transitions between questions. Ask if anyone would like to read the paragraph or Bible passage. Don’t call on anyone, but ask for a volunteer, and then be patient until someone begins. Be sure to thank the person who reads aloud.
7. Break into smaller groups occasionally. With a greater opportunity to talk in a small circle, people will connect more with the study, apply more quickly what they’re learning and ultimately get more out of their small group experience. A small circle also encourages a quiet person to participate and tends to minimize the effects of a more vocal dominant member.
8. Small circles are also helpful during prayer time. People who are unaccustomed to praying aloud will feel more comfortable trying it with just two or three others. Also, prayer requests won’t take as much time, so circles will have more time to actually pray. When you gather back in with the whole group, you can have one person from

each circle briefly update everyone on the prayer requests from their subgroups. The other great aspect of subgrouping is that it fosters leadership development. As you ask people in the group to facilitate discussion or to lead a prayer circle, it gives them a small leadership step that can build their confidence.

9. Rotate facilitators occasionally. You may be perfectly capable of hosting each time, but you will help others grow in their faith and gifts if you give them opportunities to host the group.
10. One final challenge (for new or first-time hosts). Before your first opportunity to lead, look up each of the following six passages. Read each one as a devotional exercise to help prepare you with a shepherd’s heart. Trust us on this one. If you do this, you will be more than ready for your first meeting.

“³⁶When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field.’”

Matthew 9:36-38 (NIV)

Small Group Resources

HELP FOR HOSTS

¹⁴ I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep.”

John 10:14-15 (NIV)

² Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; ³ not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.”

1 Peter 5:2-4 (NIV)

² Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”

Philippians 2:1-5 (NIV)

²³ Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Hebrews 10:23-25 (NIV)

⁷ Instead, we were like young children among you. Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, ⁸ so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well ... ¹¹ For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, ¹² encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into His Kingdom and glory.”

1 Thessalonians 2: 7-8, 11-12 (NIV)

Small Group Resources

SMALL GROUP GUIDELINES

It's a good idea for every group to put words to their shared values, expectations, and commitments. Such guidelines will help you to design an alliance that will set you up for success. We recommend you discuss your guidelines during your first small group meeting in order to lay the foundation for a healthy group experience. Feel free to modify and make these guidelines your own!

Clear Purpose | To grow healthy, spiritual lives by building healthy small group community.

Group Attendance | To give priority to the group meeting time (call if I am absent or late).

Safe Environment | To create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved so we will be careful with being judgmental, giving quick answers, and offering our simple fixes to complex situations.

Be Confidential | To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group (unless someone states they are going to hurt someone else or themselves).

Conflict Resolution | To avoid gossip and to immediately resolve any concerns by following the principles of Matthew 18:15-17, which begins with going directly to the person with whom we have an issue.

Spiritual Health | To challenge and encourage one another to live a healthy and balanced spiritual life that is pleasing to God.

Welcome Newcomers | To invite our friends who might benefit from this study and warmly welcome newcomers.

Building Relationships | To get to know one another outside of the group time and pray for each other regularly.

Motivated Shared Responsibility | To work with each other and develop group ownership as each one of us helps with group responsibilities (rotate homes, study facilitators, snacks, drinks, collect prayer requests, etc).

Other _____

We have also discussed and agree on the following:

Childcare _____

Starting time _____

Ending time _____

If you haven't already done so, take a few minutes to fill out the small group calendar on page 112.

Small Group Resources

SMALL GROUP CALENDAR

Healthy groups share responsibilities and group ownership. It might take some time for this to develop. Shared ownership ensures that responsibility for the group doesn't fall to one person. Use the calendar to keep track of your group details. Complete this calendar at your first or second meeting. Planning ahead will increase attendance and share ownership.

DATE	SESSION	LOCATION	FACILITATOR	SNACK OR MEAL
	ONE			
	TWO			
	THREE			
	FOUR			
	FIVE			
	SIX			

Small Group Resources

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How long will this group meet?

This study includes six sessions. We encourage your group to add an extra session for a celebration. In your final session, each group member may decide if he or she desires to continue on for another study. At that time, you may also want to do some informal evaluation, discuss your group guidelines, and decide which study you want to do next.

Who is the host?

The host is the person who coordinates and facilitates your group meetings. In addition to a host, we encourage you to select one or more group members to facilitate your group discussions. Several other responsibilities can be rotated, including refreshments, prayer requests, or keeping up with those who miss a meeting. Shared ownership in the group helps everybody grow.

Where do we find new group members?

- Find people around you who are new to church, are new believers, or have shown interest in getting involved.
- Look for people you think you can help realize their potential.

- As an “open group,” your group will be listed online as an option for people wanting to join a group.
- Ask God to send the right people to your group.

How do we handle the childcare needs in our group?

Childcare needs must be handled very carefully. This is a sensitive issue. We suggest you seek creative solutions as a group. One common solution is to have the adults meet in the living room and share the cost of a babysitter (or two) who can be with the kids in another part of the house. Another popular option is to have one supervised home for the kids and a second home (close by) for the adults. If desired, the adults could rotate the responsibility of providing a lesson for the kids.

Where can I hold my Small Group?

We encourage Small Groups to meet outside the church building in the places where you like to spend your time. Some of the most common meeting places are homes, restaurants, parks, coffee shops, and office buildings.

Small Group Resources

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do I measure if group members are growing?

Make it part of your discussion whether in a group setting or individually. Here are some great questions to guide your conversation:

- What are you most looking forward to in the group?
- What do you feel like God has been doing in your life lately?
- What areas of your faith are you hoping to grow in the coming months?
- What are you focused on in your life right now?
- Have you been through First Steps? Do you remember what your spiritual gifts are?
- Have you ever served at The Bayou?
- How can I pray for you?

Everyone in your group will be at different places spiritually. The process of helping them grow is not to get them to do everything at once, it's to help identify where they currently are spiritually and offer a practical next step.

Here are some examples of next steps you can share depending where a group member is spiritually:

- Invite them to attend a Sunday service with you.
- Share your personal story and what God has been teaching you.
- Share how First Steps can help them discover their purpose and invite them to attend.
- Invite them to consider being baptized. Invite your Small Group to be there to celebrate anyone getting baptized.
- Share how you find time regularly to pray, worship, and read God's Word and encourage them to make their own plan for time with God.
- Tell them about The Bayou app and daily devotional.
- If they are ready to receive Christ, offer to pray with them.

What should I do if someone asks a question I can't answer?

It's okay to not have all the answers. Thankfully, we can find guidance through prayer, God's Word, and the Holy Spirit. Encourage them to spend time reading the Bible and praying. Also, let them know that you will do your best to get some information and get back with them at your next Small Group meeting. Always feel free to reach out to a staff member for help.

What should I do if someone in my group shares something with me (or the group) that requires attention beyond what I (or we) can provide?

If you encounter a difficult situation within your Small Group, please know that you are not alone. If a member is going through a crisis, you can rally the group around them to provide prayer, encouragement, and support. Use wisdom and be sensitive to the situation. If you are unsure of what to do, don't hesitate to ask a Bayou staff member.

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