



Weekend Reflection

FRIDAY, OCT 4 - SUNDAY, OCT

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This week we talked about how we can find ourselves hindered from God's light when we're (1) walking through seasons of **suffering**, (2) in the middle of the **mundane**, and (3) being deceived by false light into **sin**. We also talked about how there is an enemy of the light- the ruler of darkness, Satan- who tries to keep us from God's light (2 Corinthians 4:4), and about the **hope** and truth we have that NOTHING- not darkness, not death, not the enemy- can overcome God's light (John 1:5) or separate us from God's love (Romans 8:38-39).

If you missed the Gathering or just want to listen to the teaching again, you can listen online @ graceclarksville.com/momlife-resources (click on "message audio" under October 3).

Start this weekend by reflecting on the hope Jesus, the light of the world, brings to the darkness we encounter in this world and in our lives.

Take a moment to **read John 1:5** and revisit and **read John 8:12**.

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." **John 1:5** (ESV)

"Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.'" **John 8:12** (ESV)

Reflect or Journal some thoughts:

- ➔ What comes to your mind when you think of light and darkness? What can each of these words represent?
- ➔ What does it mean to you when Jesus says that He is the light of the world and that His followers will have the light of life and will not walk in darkness? How does this encourage you?
- ➔ What did you identify during the MomLife Gathering (or now) as an area that is currently making it difficult to see God's light in your life right now or is causing your faith to dim?
- ➔ What is one thing you can practically do today to fight against the darkness and arm yourself with God's light?

Meditate & Pray over **John 1:5** and/or **John 8:12** this weekend.

I find breath prayer to be a powerful spiritual tool in my life, and I encourage you to try it this weekend. Breath prayer combines prayer and Scripture meditation. The practice involves breaking a scriptural truth into two parts. One part is spoken or thought during a deep inhalation and the other part is spoken or thought during a slow exhalation.

For example: Here's how I might turn John 1:5 into a breath prayer.

As you inhale, speak / think: Your light shines. As you exhale, speak / think: in the dark.

Additional example: Here's how I might turn Psalm 46:10 "Be still, and know that I am God" into a breath prayer.

As you inhale, speak / think: Be still. As you exhale, speak / think: and know that He is God.

I like using breath prayer throughout my day. I suggest starting small by trying this breath prayer for 30 seconds. You can do this in the shower, while cooking dinner, or in a place of solitude (if you can find it). As you go about your day or weekend or week, you can increase the amount of time you spend in mediation this way.

As you reflect on these questions, meditate on these scriptures, and spend time in prayer, write down anything God reveals to you as you spend time seeking His light.

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Weekday Reading

MONDAY, OCT 7 - THURSDAY, OCT 10

We're going to spend the next 3 weeks focusing on each of the 3 areas that can threaten to steal our light. This week we're going to focus on the topic of *suffering*.

Suffering is something we don't like to talk about, let alone experience, and, yet, we all encounter it at some point in our lives. We need to talk about it, process it, and find God in it. In fact, one of the greatest gifts I've encountered when seeking God in my seasons of suffering has been the deepening of my faith through the unexpected intimacy of God's presence there with me.

"Instead of seeking first for escape from suffering, the soul hungry to know Christ will seek in it the means to know Him better."

-Elisabeth Elliot

In seasons of suffering, we might find ourselves asking a lot of hard questions. *Why does God allow suffering? If God is so good, how can He allow bad things to happen to good people?* This is my first piece of encouragement: let's not be afraid to ask or wrestle with questions that come up. Let's use them as the means to draw us near to God and get to know Him better. Spend this week slowly processing and walking through your pain with Jesus and bringing your thoughts, feelings, and questions to Him. Give yourself permission to ask questions and feel what you feel. But do it with Jesus,

surrendered to His light. Because if we don't bring it all to Jesus, the enemy can take our questions and lead us into doubt and darkness.

"Faith does not eliminate questions. But faith knows where to take them."

-Elizabeth Elliot

When we take our pain and our questions to God, He will reveal His light and truth to us. We can find healing and hope in times of suffering when we make the decision to draw near to and to pursue God's light and truth.

As you're processing this week, think about these biblical truths. Our world is not as it's supposed to be ever since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden; therefore, suffering exists. God allows suffering and is sovereign over it. Jesus entered into suffering on our behalf, and his victory over darkness and death through his death and resurrection ultimately offers us life and hope.

"Suffering was indispensable for the world's salvation.

There was no other way but the cross.

The servant is not greater than his Lord.

If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him."

-Elisabeth Elliot

So, even when suffering comes and we feel like we're walking in darkness and God seems nowhere to be found, we have a choice to lean on truth and trust that He is ever-present and that His light will break through. God has not abandoned or left us. He is near to us when we're broken-hearted in our suffering (Psalm 34:18).

Read the following scriptures and process suffering in the light with God's truth. Choose one (or a few) a day or read them all at once if you happen to have an unexpected large chunk of time. Remember, this is a *guide* for you to use however it best fits your time and needs. After you read, journal about the scriptures using the questions that follow as a guide.

- ➔ **Pain/ Suffering:** Numbers 11:11, Ecclesiastes 7:3, Habakkuk 1-3, Isaiah 53, Mark 14:34, Acts 14:22, 2 Corinthians 4:8-9, James 5:13
- ➔ **Lament:** Psalm 13: 1-2, 22: 2, 77: 1-14, 88, 107: 28-30, 102, Matthew 7:46
- ➔ **Comfort:** Psalm 34:18, 56:8, 94:19, Matthew 5:4, 2 Corinthians 1:5
- ➔ **Hope & Victory:** Psalm 63: 5-8, 66: 10-12, 71:20, Isaiah 42: 16, 43:2, 61: 1-4, Joel 2:25, Hosea 2:15, Jeremiah 30:17, 31:25, Romans 8:28, John 16:33, 2 Corinthians 4:8-18

Journal about the scriptures you read:

- **What STUCK OUT most to you?** This could be something new or a reminder of something you've forgotten.
- **Did any QUESTIONS come to mind?** Pray and ask God about it. If it lingers, talk about it with someone you trust and respect.
- **What are you learning about the CHARACTER OF GOD in these passages?** This could be something that helped you to better understand the person or actions of the Almighty. It's something that stirs you to feel more connected and love him more.
- **How are you moved to PRAY today?**

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Weekend Reflection

FRIDAY, OCT 11 - SUNDAY, OCT

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Which of the scriptures from this week have stuck out to you most?

As you may have noticed, there were a lot of verses listed this week. These were just a sample of the countless scriptures on suffering and how God speaks hope into suffering—because this is the Bible and Gospel story: humanity moves from walking in darkness and into light because of Jesus.

This weekend, I want you to focus on one area of suffering or pain in your life that you're walking through or that God has brought to your attention that He wants to shine His light on and process this in prayer with Him. Elisabeth Elliot, who I've already quoted a few times, is the author of *A Path Through Suffering*. In her book, she suggests we can deal with suffering of any kind by doing these 4 things:

1. Recognize it
2. Accept it
3. Offer it to God as a sacrifice
4. Offer yourself with it

Think about these four steps in regards to the area of suffering that God has revealed to you and use the psalm that appears below to meditate, pray, and journal your thoughts this weekend. Let's take our suffering to Jesus and let in His light. The next few sections will help you do this.

Psalm 28, which appears below, is one of many psalms that is an example of a special type of prayer called a lament. Biblical lament, in its most basic form, begins with addressing God and bringing the honest pain and cries of your heart to Him and ends with a declaration of praise. Praise is so important because we will find healing and light as we choose to praise through the pain and darkness. We leave little room for the enemy to attack when we do this.

*Lord, I call to you;
my rock, do not be deaf to me.
If you remain silent to me,
I will be like those going down to the Pit.
Listen to the sound of my pleading
when I cry to you for help..
Blessed be the Lord,
for he has heard the sound of my pleading.
The Lord is my strength and shield;
my heart trusts in him, and I am helped.
Therefore my heart celebrates,
and I give thanks to him with my song.*

-Psalm 28: 1-2, 6-7 (CSB)

Use Psalm 28 and the questions below to journal and pray your own lament.

- ➔ What is the honest cry of your heart in your suffering? What are you feeling or thinking or asking? Are you filled with sadness or anger? Tell God. Are you desperate for His help? Cry it out. No need to hold back, God knows already and He can handle it.
- ➔ What promise or character attribute of God's can you focus on and praise this weekend? For instance, Psalm 28 praises God for being a strength and shield.

After you've written and prayed your lament, meditate on and/or memorize this verse:

"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

-John 16:33 (ESV)

Take heart through your troubles and suffering in the hope of the truth you have in Jesus, the light of the world.

One last thing, you don't have to process your suffering alone or walk this path alone. Not only is God with you, but let people in so they can walk alongside you too. Who is a safe person of light with whom you can reach out to and share your lament? A spouse? A friend? Your Table Leader or Mentor Mom? If you're struggling through deep traumatic pain and hopelessness in a dark season, there is no shame in seeking professional help. Licensed professional counselors can provide an excellent source of support and walk with you (there is a list of recommended counselors in the MomLife booklet you received at your first MomLife Gathering).

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Weekday Reading

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MONDAY, OCT 14 - THURSDAY, OCT

This week we're going to focus on what tries to steal our light in the *mundane*--and the mundane moments are, of course, what make up most of our lives. The repetition of our small, ordinary, daily tasks that seem insignificant and dull can leave *us* feeling insignificant and our *faith* growing dull. We talked last Gathering about how the life of Jesus and His light informs our mundane and transforms the dull and ordinary in our lives into sacred opportunities for His glory to be experienced in and displayed through us.

"Stop trying to escape your ordinary life. But lean into it instead."

-Lisa Jo Baker

Pause - Reflect and Journal some thoughts:

- ➔ Are you trying to escape your ordinary life? Are you dull and bored in your life and faith in the middle of your mundane?
- ➔ Why? What does that look like for you? What thoughts and feelings are behind this? List them out on a piece of paper. We're going to come back to this list.

Spiritual warfare is present even in our mundane moments. The enemy, the father of lies (John 8:44), feeds us lies that attack our identity and work in the mundane. We may find those lies forming themselves into a loud inner critic: *This doesn't even matter. Her life is so much better than mine. If only I had that, then I'd be happy. If only I could do something worthwhile. I will never be good enough. I just can't seem to get it together. I have no talents; there's no way God can use someone like me.* I'm sure you can add even more thoughts that are rooted in lies like these.

Pause - Reflect and Journal some thoughts:

- ➔ Are you believing any lies? (About yourself, your work, God?) Go back to your list and label what you wrote as either a truth or lie. Identify the lies you're being fed, take them captive, and walk in the freedom of truth. (Jennie Allen has a great free resource to guide you through this helpful spiritual practice of taking thoughts captive by naming what's a lie and what's truth--*Set the record straight: a guide to combat the lies we believe about ourselves*.
<https://www.ifgathering.com/settherecordstraight/>)

The enemy feeds us lies to hinder us from being God's light in our everyday moments because he wants to stop the Kingdom of God. Yes, the enemy recognizes the power of God's light in the mundane, so should we!

Jesus modeled being the light to the world through mundane moments like ours. In her article "Your Mundane Matters to Jesus" published online on *Unlocking the Bible*, writer Rachel Lehner enlightens us

and challenges us to shift our perspective to see the mundane as a sacred reflection of Jesus's light; she writes:

All our "mundane" is meant to be offered as a living sacrifice. As servants doing mundane work, we are beautiful and reflect our Savior, who took on human flesh to walk in our shoes all the way to the cross. His sinless, incarnate life is the ultimate expression of human holiness, and I long to do the will of my Father as he did. May we sacrificially embrace each task, even the most mundane, knowing everything done in his name carries eternal significance.

Take a moment to reflect on this.

➔ Do you live out your mundane moments as these sacred offerings that reflect His light? How does this perspective shift encourage you?

For me, I need this perspective shift continually throughout my days. I'm continually taking thoughts that are dismissive, defeating, discouraging, etc. captive and replacing them with this kingdom-minded mentality. I find such encouragement in this excerpt from *Glimpses of Grace: Treasuring the Gospel in Your Home* by Gloria Furman and love the biblical truths she cites:

So here I am at my kitchen sink, scrubbing crusty blueberry bits off the inside of a cup. But instead of grieving over my inadequacies to serve joyfully or gloating with pride that I've restrained my evil tongue from making snide remarks, an entirely different dynamic is at work.

It's faith working through love (Galatians 5:5-6).

God works in me through his Word (1 Thessalonians 2:13). This gift of grace enables me to praise the Lord and serve others gladly as I confess with tears of joyful relief, "For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever" (Romans 11:36).

Even in my darkest doubts when I do the same thing again the next day, my hope is still built on the righteousness of Christ. The gospel keeps me relating to God on the basis of Jesus' perfections, not on the illusions of my religious achievements. God strengthens me and protects me according to his faithfulness, not mine (2 Thessalonians 3:3). So I can scrub dried blueberry bits as unto the Lord as my heart is satisfied in God because his kindness to me in Christ leads me to repentance again and again.

Has the mundane left you bitter, resentful, or with a spirit of complaint? I know it has me. This perspective shift of choosing to commune with Jesus in the mundane and fighting back against the dark forces that come up against me has left me deeply convicted at times. You see, that's what happens when we choose God's light, it shines and brings clarity into our hearts and clarity brings conviction which ultimately leads us into repentance. This is GOOD for us! This is how we move into that abundant life with Jesus right where we are (John 10:10).

Take time to read the following scriptures that help shine God's light in the mundane moments in our lives.

➔ **Jesus & the mundane:** Matthew 12 & 14, John 13, 19:14, 25: 34-39, Mark 9:37

- **Applications & encouragement for us in the mundane:** Colossians 3:17, 23-24, 1 Thessalonians 2:13, 3: 5-11

Journal about what you read. Use the questions below as a guide:

- **What STUCK OUT most to you?** This could be something new or a reminder of something you've forgotten.
- **Did any QUESTIONS come to mind?** Pray and ask God about it. If it lingers, talk about it with someone you trust and respect.
- **What are you learning about the CHARACTER OF GOD in this passage?** This could be something that helped you to better understand the person or actions of the Almighty. It's something that stirs you to feel more connected and love him more.
- **How are you moved to PRAY today?**

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Weekend Reflection

FRIDAY, OCT 18 - SUNDAY, OCT

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Which of the scriptures from this week stuck out to you most or helped you have this perspective shift of seeing the mundane as sacred? How are you noticing God's light in the mundane?

Let's look closer at this passage found in **1 Thessalonians 5:5-22** (CSB). The author Paul is writing to encourage the church in Thessalonica, but these words are to encourage us as well. Take a moment to read through these verses:

5 For you are all children of light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or the darkness. **6** So then, let us not sleep, like the rest, but let us stay awake and be self-controlled. **7** For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. **8** But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled and put on the armor of faith and love, and a helmet of the hope of salvation. **9** For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, **10** who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. **11** Therefore encourage one another and build each other up as you are already doing.

12 Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to give recognition to those who labor among you and lead you in the Lord and admonish you, **13** and to regard them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. **14** And we exhort you, brothers and sisters: warn those who are idle, comfort the discouraged, help the weak, be patient with everyone. **15** See to it that no one repays evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good for one another and for all. **16** Rejoice always, **17** pray constantly, **18** give thanks in everything; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. **19** Don't stifle the Spirit. **20** Don't despise prophecies, **21** but test all things. Hold on to what is good. **22** Stay away from every kind of evil.

Reflect & Journal - Use these questions to continue to reflect on **1 Thessalonians 5: 5-22** and journal your thoughts this weekend:

- ➔ How does Paul talk about the light and darkness in this passage? What themes do you see here that we've been talking and learning about?
- ➔ How does Paul identify/describe those who are in Christ as believers?
- ➔ Make a list of what Paul tells the believers in Thessalonica to do and not do. Now reflect on each of these areas in your own life. Which are you already incorporating in your daily life? Which of these things can you begin to do that you're not already doing?
- ➔ How can you guard yourself against the enemy's attacks in the mundane? What encouragement do you find here? How can you encourage someone else this week?

Pray - Take some time to pray and ask God to give you His eyes to see life in the mundane with His kingdom-perspective of light and to reveal to you what you can do daily to be in His light.

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Weekday Reading

MONDAY, OCT 21 - THURSDAY, OCT 24

This week we're going to focus on the last area we talked about at October 3rd's Gathering: how the *deceit of sin* tries to steal our light. Spiritual warfare has been present throughout our discussions of suffering and the mundane, but scripture tells us that the enemy is continually on the prowl and we need to be alert at all times (1 Peter 5:8).

God is light (1 John 1:5) and truth (Isaiah 65:16, John 14:6).

The enemy is false light (2 Corinthians 11:14) and the father of lies (John 8:44).

When Satan lies, he deceives us by twisting God's truth. When he tempts, he deceives us by offering a false light, or satisfaction, to us.

Y'all, the enemy is tricky, but He is NOT God.

"Be on your guard and stay awake. Your enemy, the devil is like a roaring lion, sneaking around to find someone to attack."

1 Peter 5:8 (CEV)

So, we're aware we have this enemy trying to give us a false light to prevent us from living in and being in God's light. So what do we do with this knowledge? How do we be on guard and stay alert? It's not enough to know that we're being or going to be attacked, we need to prepare for battle and scripture teaches us how to do this. The scriptures this week (especially Ephesians 6:10-18) will show you how to put on the armor of God and equip yourself for battle.

But, what if we've already sinned? What do we do when (not if) we fall into deception and sin? The enemy is ready for his second round of attacks. Once he's tempted us, he tries to then accuse (Revelation 12:10 tells us he is the accuser of our souls) and tries to hold us captive through shame and fear that lead us into hiding. We need to know that Jesus offers us freedom and forgiveness and the only way to receive these are by exposing our sin to the light, confessing, and repenting. Jesus is waiting to offer us his grace, mercy, and forgiveness.

"Therefore repent and turn back, so that your sins may be wiped out, that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord..."

Acts 3:19-20a (CSB)

Here are some scriptures to help you gain understanding about the deception of sin, spiritual warfare, our need for repentance, and God's gifts of grace, mercy, and forgiveness.

→ **Spiritual Warfare**

Ephesians 5:6-21

Ephesians 6:10-18* (Armor of God)

2 Thessalonians 3:3

Hebrews 12:1

2 Corinthians 11:3

→ **Repentance & Forgiveness**

1 John 1:9

Psalms 103:10-12

Isaiah 1:18, 43: 25, 55:7

Colossians 1:13-14

Revelation 2:4-7

Journal about what you read. Use the questions below as a guide:

- **What STUCK OUT most to you?** This could be something new or a reminder of something you've forgotten.
- **Did any QUESTIONS come to mind?** Pray and ask God about it. If it lingers, talk about it with someone you trust and respect.
- **What are you learning about the CHARACTER OF GOD in this passage?** This could be something that helped you to better understand the person or actions of the Almighty. It's something that stirs you to feel more connected and love him more.
- **How are you moved to PRAY today?** Do you need to confess and repent?

This week as we prepare for our next Gathering, lean into the delight and abundance God offers us. Let's turn back to **Psalms 36: 7-9** and choose to rejoice and live in expectation of these truths!

*How priceless is your unfailing love, O God!
 People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.
 They feast on the abundance of your house;
 you give them drink from your river of delights.
 For with you is the fountain of life;
 in your light we see light.
 Psalm 36:7-9 (NIV)*

Optional Family Activities

Get your kids and/or spouse involved in what you are learning, reading, and reflecting on through MomLife! Each Reflection Guide will include a space like this with ideas and notes for how to read and have discussion/activities with your family around Scripture.

- ➔ Grab a blanket and spend some time outside at night looking at the sky as a family. Discuss how the darkness makes your kids feel? What gives us light? Discuss how the sun is the source of light for our planet and the benefits of the sun's light (growth, warmth, navigation, etc.). Discuss how the moon's light works by reflecting the light of the sun. Lead this into a discussion of how God's son, Jesus, is our constant source of light and we can live like the moon reflecting his light.
- ➔ Gather together and do this family activity, a Bible lesson about shining God's light. This Bible lesson, using a tea light in the dark, will help kids better understand how to find and follow the light of God. <https://www.christianitycove.com/sailing-toward-the-light-bible-lesson/7246/>
- ➔ Or try this fun hands on-activity with younger children in which they compare a broken light bulb to a working light bulb and discuss how they can "shine" brightly for Jesus. Grab the detailed instructions on-line here: <https://www.kidsofintegrity.com/lessons/easter/hands-options/lesson-light-bulb>.
- ➔ Have your kids start practicing paying attention to God, how God wants them to live (areas of sin in their life), who they are in Him, and centering themselves on their Light source by using the children's journal I created called [*Living Life Well: A Daily Growth Journal for Kids*](#) (available on Amazon).

Additional Resources [links also found @ graceclarksville.com/momlife-resources]:

Books:

- ➔ [*A Path Through Suffering*](#) by Elisabeth Elliot
- ➔ [*It's Not Supposed to Be This Way*](#) by Lysa TerKeurst
- ➔ [*Every Moment Holy*](#) by Douglas Kaine McKelvey (a book of prayers reminding us that our lives have sacred purpose even and especially when we are too busy or too caught up in our busyness to notice)

- [Liturgy of the Ordinary: Sacred Practices in Everyday Life](#) by Tish Harrison Warren
- [Battlefield of the Mind](#) by Joyce Meyer

Groups:

- [Celebrate Recovery](#): recovery program for anyone with hurts, habits or hangups that feel overwhelming or defeating. This ministry is a safe place to find community and freedom from the issues that can have a controlling grip on life.

Podcast:

- [You can't have purpose without pressure: Made for This](#) with Jennie Allen
- [Out of the Ordinary Podcast](#) with Lisa-Jo Baker

Songs:

- ["Tremble"](#) - Mosaic MSC
- ["Fear is a Liar"](#) - Zach Williams
- ["No Longer Slaves"](#) - Bethel Music
- ["Chain Breaker"](#) - Zach Williams
- ["If We're Honest"](#) - Francesca Battistelli
- ["Not Today"](#) - Hillsong
- ["Light in the Darkness"](#) - Hillsong

Bible:

- Get a good Study Bible, pick a translation that you understand, NLT & CSB are easier to read.
 - ◆ [The She Reads Truth Study Bible](#) is a good option.

Bible Studies:

- (Suffering / Grief) [Mourning and Dancing](#) from She Reads Truth
- (Spiritual Warfare) [Armor of God](#) by Priscilla Shirer

Guided Journal:

- [Life Worth Living: A Daily Growth Journal](#) by Kristin Vanderlip
- [Living Life Well: A Daily Growth Journal for Kids](#) by Kristin Vanderlip

Apps/Websites:

- <https://unlockingthebible.org/2016/10/your-mundane-matters-to-jesus/>
- <https://thankfulhomemaker.com/serving-the-lord-in-our-mundane-moments/>
- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/god-rules-the-mundane>