

LOVE JESUS.
LOVE *LIKE* JESUS.



LIFE ALONG THE WAY

A DAILY WALK WITH JESUS

BY JOURNEYWISE

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT
[journeywise.network](https://www.journeywise.network)

An aerial photograph of a winding asphalt road through a dense forest. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent compass rose graphic. The text "Your journey awaits..." is written in a white, cursive font across the center of the image.

Your journey awaits...

INTRODUCTION

SAMPLES

- **Daily Devotionals**
- **Leaders' Guides**
Weekly lesson guides for Sunday School classes, bible studies or other small groups
- **Family Road Trip**
Weekly discipleship guide for families with children/young teens
- **the Great Adventure**
Weekly discipleship guide for individuals, couples, older teens; a call to action

ONLINE RESOURCES

- **Servant School**
- **Website & App**

TESTIMONIALS

NOTES

What is **Life Along the Way**?

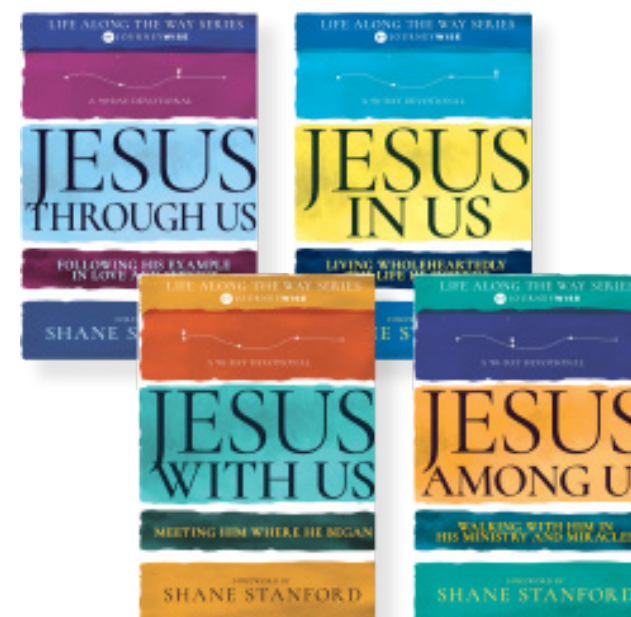
From the moment we take our first breath, life is a journey. We experience growth, disappointment, difficulty, pain, love, blessing, happiness, struggle, hope, and aging. All of these experiences, in their own unique way, shape us and create the story of our lives.

So, why is it that so many of us focus on escaping this life? Some of us approach life on earth as merely a stop along the way to our eternal destination. Others of us spend far more time worrying about the act of dying or fretting over the difficulties of this life than we spend considering whether or not we are living life to its fullest in the here and now and showing love to other people.

More than two thousand years ago, a Man named Jesus also journeyed through life. He experienced everything that we experience, but He had a special mission, and His experience of reaching His destination was a bit different from ours. After He died, He conquered death and rose again, entering into a brand-new life—one that He offers to us too. He secured the answers to both life and death.

As Christians, we believe that Jesus is alive and working even now. But, what's more, we believe that He is ready and willing to journey with us. Did you catch that? **Jesus wants to journey with you—yes, you!—in what we here at JourneyWise refer to as “Life Along the Way.”**

You read that right. Jesus wants to ride shotgun as you navigate your life's path. He wants to help you learn, grow, see, feel, and experience life in a completely new way. He laid all of this out for you and me in the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.



We created the four **Life Along the Way** daily devotionals to capture the essence of Jesus's life, ministry, death, and ascension. And you are holding in your hands book one. (While we encourage you to read the books sequentially, you may read them in any order you choose.)

Whether you've been in the church your whole life, are a curious skeptic, or find yourself somewhere in between, we hope that this journey through Scripture focused on the way Jesus “did life” will add great purpose to your Life Along the Way. We trust that God will give you wisdom for the journey as He grows you into His likeness and that you will be transformed as you live daily with Jesus.

Philippians 1:6 says, “I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns” (Nlt).

As you journey with Jesus, our hope is that you would Love Jesus and Love Like Jesus.

It's time to hit the road!

—The JourneyWise Team



Each devotional is designed to be read in ninety days, creating a 365-day journey with Jesus chronologically through the gospels.

The four **Life Along the Way** books are as follows:

JESUS WITH US

Meeting Him Where He Began

JESUS AMONG US

Walking with Him in His Ministry & Miracles

JESUS THROUGH US

Following His Example in Love & Service

JESUS IN US

Living Wholeheartedly the Life He Intends



**“Love it! Love it!”
I felt an intimacy
with Jesus that I
have not felt in other
bible studies. I have
eagerly sought Him
out each day. The
daily prayers provide
healing and direction
to my soul.”**

— CARRIE H.



DAY 1

SCRIPTURE READING

LUKE 1:1-4 (NLT)

Many people have set out to write accounts about the events that have been fulfilled among us. They used the eyewitness reports circulating among us from the early disciples. Having carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I also have decided to write an accurate account for you, most honorable Theophilus, so you can be certain of the truth of everything you were taught.

LIFE LESSONS FROM JESUS

Every journey begins with that first step and an acknowledgement and acceptance of the many steps to come. Some moments may be harder than others, others will be easier. Christ's stories and teachings come with both loving assurance and maybe a slight reprimand or two to help us get back on track. Be it one or the other, they are solely meant to encourage us to live our best lives, resting in God's love and Christ's hope. Jesus came to bring that hope and truth to our lives, and it's important never to forget that as the days pass by.

As a journey, keep in mind that it's not a race to the end. Allow yourself to relax and breathe. This trek is designed to allow space for change and reflection. Both of these take time. Luke sought the truth over everything, and we are following his lead. Rest in the truth of Christ's words and comforts as you go along—His promise of hope for a broken world.

We will be following a chronological look at the life of Jesus through the Gospels, sitting in the shade of His vibrant humanity as He experiences the world around him. We hope Christ's life will inspire you, teach you new things about yourself and the world around you, and help you feel loved and accepted by God.

WHERE ARE YOU?

- Have you been on a long journey before?*
- Where did you go and what did you bring?*
- What did you enjoy about your journey?*
- What's the most memorable part of that journey?*

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank You for the Scriptures that reveal Your goodness. I pray that this journey will open my eyes to who You are, and that I will learn how to love You and love like You. Give me strength for this journey as I learn that You are with me every step of the way. Make it my passion to seek You with all my heart in all that I do and say. In Your name, Amen.

DAY 2

SCRIPTURE READING

LUKE 1:5-25 (NLT)

When Herod was king of Judea, there was a Jewish priest named Zechariah. He was a member of the priestly order of Abijah, and his wife, Elizabeth, was also from the priestly line of Aaron. Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous in God's eyes, careful to obey all of the Lord's commandments and regulations. They had no children because Elizabeth was unable to conceive, and they were both very old.

One day Zechariah was serving God in the Temple, for his order was on duty that week. As was the custom of the priests, he was chosen by lot to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and burn incense. While the incense was being burned, a great crowd stood outside, praying.

While Zechariah was in the sanctuary, an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the incense altar. Zechariah was shaken and overwhelmed with fear when he saw him. But the angel said, "Don't be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you are to name him John. You will have great joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the eyes of the Lord. He must never touch wine or other alcoholic drinks. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth. And he will turn many Israelites to the Lord their God. He will be a man with the spirit and power of Elijah.

He will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and he will cause those who are rebellious to accept the wisdom of the godly." Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I be sure this will happen? I'm an old man now, and my wife is also well along in years." Then the angel said, "I am Gabriel! I stand in the very presence of God. It was He who sent me to bring you this good news!

But now, since you didn't believe what I said, you will be silent and unable to speak until the child is born. For my words will certainly be fulfilled at the proper time." Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah to come out of the sanctuary, wondering why he was taking so long.

When he finally did come out, he couldn't speak to them. Then they realized from his gestures and his silence that he must have seen a vision in the sanctuary.

When Zechariah's week of service in the Temple was over, he returned home. Soon afterward his wife, Elizabeth, became pregnant and went into seclusion for five months. "How kind the Lord is!" she exclaimed. "He has taken away my disgrace of having no children."

LIFE LESSONS FROM JESUS

God often works in ways we could never have expected. The initial news or circumstances might not even appear to be a blessing until far later. God sent Gabriel to announce a lifechanging development for a far greater future, something that didn't even seem possible, and Zechariah couldn't even take it in at first—it was too much. The unlikely path God chose to introduce Jesus to the world came as a shock to Zechariah. The larger plan, though, would alter the course of humankind.

As you go through life's ups and downs, always take a moment and let life sink in. Keep your heart as open as you can. Sometimes our immediate reactions to news or events can make things quite a bit harder than they needed to be. Zechariah spent months unable to converse with his wife during her pregnancy after refusing to accept Gabriel's words. It could have been so much easier on both of them.

Focus on staying open to opportunities and change instead of becoming resigned to a current situation or maybe even overly comfortable in one just because it's what you know. Imagine the possibilities! It would be a shame to miss out on a miracle when it shows up at your door.



WHERE ARE YOU?

When was a time you received surprising news?

What was your reaction to it?

When have you ever felt overwhelmed by news?

PRAYER

Father, thank You for working in miraculous ways! Thank You for Your loving patience in sending Jesus to show us how to follow. In Jesus' name, Amen.

DAY 3

SCRIPTURE READING

LUKE 1:26-38 (NLT)

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!"

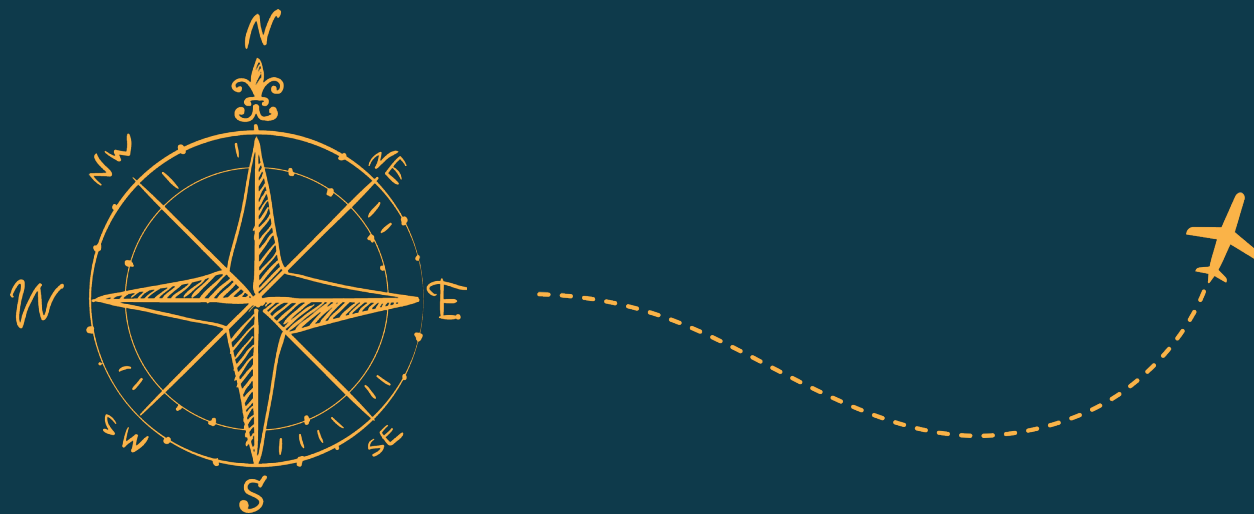
Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. "Don't be afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "for you have found favor with God! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name Him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High.

The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And He will reign over Israel forever; His Kingdom will never end!"

Mary asked the angel, "But how can this happen? I am a virgin."

The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and He will be called the Son of God. What's more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she has conceived a son and is now in her sixth month. For the word of God will never fail."

Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true." And then the angel left her.



LIFE LESSONS FROM JESUS

What a response! Mary discovers her entire life is about to be shaken up and turned upside down. She's having the *Son of God* and she replies with graceful acceptance and genuine hope for God's promise.

Fear can make it difficult to face even the positive changes or additions in our lives. Fear of the unknown can be paralyzing when we're presented with something new. We don't always get to choose whether we're taking a specific path or not, but we can decide how we're going to face it.

Mary probably knew the road wouldn't be easy. Pregnancy and child-rearing themselves are journeys. It's common to reject the changes out of hand or curl up inside ourselves, trying to protect what we already have as we hold onto the familiarity of our current life course. It's understandable and we can all relate, but it can also limit us. As you keep pressing on through the next ninety days, look back at Mary's courage. That level of acceptance might come with some significant changes, but keep in mind that the strength to respond with that same grace is within you.



WHERE ARE YOU?

What has been the most memorable event in your lifetime?

How old were you? Where were you?

What did you do? How did you respond?

PRAYER

Thank You Lord for being Jehovah-Shammah, the God who is there. May You always remind me of Your prevailing presence in my life. Thank You that nothing is impossible with You. In Your name, Amen.



JESUS WITH US

Week 1, Day 5

Mary's Praise of God

Read: *Luke 1:46-56*

THEME

Great Faith Magnifies the Lord

Mary sings out of her great faith and that faith magnifies the Lord. She believed and because she believed it has brought God glory from generation to generation.

SAMPLE FROM JESUS WITH US LEADERS' GUIDE

TEACHING

Mary's song is an amazing outpouring of a young woman's faith in God. What makes it even more unbelievable is the fact that this is the first time that God has spoken to one of his people for 400 years.

These years have been years of waiting and anticipation of God's plan. How will God restore Israel? How will he deal with evil? Who is the long-awaited Messiah - King through whom God will fulfill his purposes? Everyone in Israel has been waiting for the revelation of God's plan and the person he chooses to reveal it to is not a priest, or a king, or a prophet, but a young virgin. She is not powerful. She is not rich. She has no platform, but she is faithful. Hear her words when the angel tells her what will happen: "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true" **(1:38)**. Her answer is, "yes Lord. I'll do whatever you say."

It is to this very young, probably teenage girl to whom God reveals his marvelous, mysterious plan. The angel doesn't leave any details out: "You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end" **(1:31-33)**! God is about to do everything everyone has been waiting for through Mary's son.

STOP & DISCUSS

Why do you think God chose Mary?

Does it matter that Mary was a virgin? Why?

How does Mary's story change your view on how God can use you?

TEACHING

Mary's Song comes right after Elizabeth remarks on Mary's faith **(1:45)**. It shows her psychological and emotional state in light of her belief about what God is doing. Out of the outpouring of her faith comes a song.

Many throughout history have called this song "the Magnificat" because of Mary's first words: "My soul praises the Lord." The word for praise can also mean "to magnify or enlarge" (Greek: megalunei) That's exactly what Mary is doing with her faith: she is magnifying the Lord and making his name great. Here is how she does that through her life and song:

First, Mary's faith magnifies the type of people God uses. There is such an intense juxtaposition in this passage between who Mary is and who she will bear. She is a poor peasant virgin girl, not a powerful princess married to a king. Yet God takes who is lowly and weak to work his plans in order to display his glory. He is the God who constantly takes the poor, sinful, and broken and uses them to upend the powerful. He does this because the rich and powerful put their faith in themselves and human institutions. The poor and destitute put their faith in God.

STOP & DISCUSS

Why does God like to use the poor and powerless?

Mary magnifies God with a song. How do you magnify the Lord?

How does your faith inspire you to create?

TEACHING

Secondly, Mary's faith magnifies God's power and justice. God is so powerful and his arm is so mighty, that he will overthrow all of the kingdoms of the world through the faith and obedience of a young girl. Mary says "His mighty arm has done tremendous things! He has scattered the proud and haughty ones. He has brought down princes from their thrones and exalted the humble **(vv. 51-52)**. This highlights something about Mary's faith - she believes that God can do anything. As crazy as it may be for a poor virgin girl to have a child, she believes that God can do it because he said he would. There is literally nothing impossible for him, especially when it comes to making the world right.

Thirdly, Mary's faith magnifies the faithfulness of God. The last thing that Mary's song really highlights is that God is faithful. Mary and the people of Israel have been waiting that God would act on their behalf. Waiting is a form of believing. Even after 400 years, God's people hadn't given up on his promised future. He has always been faithful to Israel and will continue to be. His action through Mary shows once again that God is faithful and never gives up on his promises. If God says he will do something he will do it no matter the odds. God is faithful and he is showing it through Mary.

STOP & DISCUSS

Is it hard for you to believe God can do anything? Why?

What situation in your life would you like God's power to manifest?

How have you seen God's faithfulness in your life?

Live it

Where can you step out and faith right now that will magnify the Lord? Where has the Lord shown great faithfulness to you? Where has God shown his mighty power? When we believe we magnify God. Whether it's through song or action, great faith displayed in a believer tells the world that Jesus is king. What kind of song does your life sing?

Deuteronomy 6:4-5, ESV, says, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.”

Your Life Along the Way Bible study presents the perfect opportunity for thirteen weeks of family discipleship. As you meditate on God’s Word, you will naturally want to share what you are learning about Jesus with your children and teens. This weekly family devotion provides structure for a short, fun family Bible study with your kids on the identity and story of Jesus Christ.

Each week, you will find:

Several questions to facilitate a family discussion

A focus on one characteristic of Jesus

A short Scripture reading

A fun family activity

A verse to read & retain

A prayer from the Bible



Week One: Jesus Is Holy

As a family, we are about to embark on an exciting journey together. We are going to learn more about who Jesus is, straight from God’s Word. Now, you can probably tell us a lot of important information about Jesus, but he is so amazing that you can spend your whole life reading about him in the Bible—and you are about to learn even more!

Jesus lived a truly miraculous life. We are going to learn about his life and about his closest circle of friends, known as his disciples. You will see that everywhere Jesus traveled, people followed him because he was so special. In fact, the things Jesus did were so amazing, they frightened some people. There were also people who hated Jesus, because they hated God. Just like many people today, they did not want to admit they were sinners or that they needed a Savior.

The sad news is that Jesus was killed by people who hated him, even though he never, ever sinned. But the good news of the gospel is that he died for us! And then he was miraculously raised from the dead by his Father in heaven. You and I do sin. You see, in all of history, only Jesus was sinless. Our sin separates us from God. But, if we believe in Jesus and turn from our sins, we will be forgiven our sins, and we can live forever in the family of God.

The Bible gives Jesus many titles. He is the Lamb of God, Light of the World, and the Bread of Life. Over the next few months, we are going to learn thirteen really important names, or attributes, of Jesus. Let’s begin this week with Jesus is Holy.

 **ACTIVITY**

The word *holy* has two definitions. When we talk about Jesus being holy, we mean that he is exalted—lifted up. We worship him because he is worthy—he is all good, with nothing bad in him. Jesus is God the Son, and God is not like us.

Now, we can be holy, too. That's not because we are worthy of worship or exalted. We are not God. When we say a person or a thing—like a building—is holy, it means we are devoted to God's service. If you are holy, you are forgiven by God and you worship him.


Draw a picture of a place that is holy—set aside for God's service, like your house or church. Then, draw a picture of some holy people you know who love Jesus. If you would rather, make a list of everything holy in your life.

 **READ TOGETHER**

Luke 1:1-4, 26-56

 **DISCUSS**

- Luke wrote to his friend about the life of Jesus. Why is his letter important to us today?
- How did Mary react when the angel spoke to her? How would you feel if an angel talked to you?
- How does God talk to us today?
- Why do you think Mary hurried to see her cousin, Elizabeth—the mother of John the Baptist?
- Mary sang a song to God because she felt so blessed.
 - Do you have a favorite praise song or hymn? What is it?

 **READ & RETAIN**

Luke 1:35, ESV: *And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God."*

 **PRAY**

Father, let my soul magnify you, God. Let my spirit rejoice in Jesus—God my Savior. Thank you for sending Jesus to be born as a sinless, holy man so that I can be forgiven for my sins.

From Luke 1:46-49

 **TO DO THIS WEEK**

The good news of the gospel of Jesus is too wonderful to keep to ourselves. This week, practice sharing the gospel with your family. See if you can share God's great plan for salvation with each other in a minute or less several times this week.



the great adventure

SAMPLE FROM LIFE ALONG THE WAY FAMILY DEVOTIONS

**As we focus on
Jesus' life and
what He was like,
it's important
to begin taking
steps to truly
*start acting and
being like Him.***

That is the goal after all, to take on more of His character and show love and grace to both ourselves and the people around us. We aren't meant to just read about Jesus and walk away with some good feelings, proud of Him but living the same way we always have. Love is an action and obedience requires action as well. That means getting up and doing something (potentially out of our comfort zone). Following Christ is about inviting change.

Whether you've been trying to figure out how to go about this process of change for a while, you've been avoiding the thought entirely because it felt too overwhelming, or you've already put in some effort in a new direction but need more guidance, here are some activities to get you rolling.

1. make a list

While we're going about our busy lives—most likely stressed and distracted—it's easy to forget how much we do have going for us. We lose track of all that we've been given over the years and how much we've accomplished. There have been talents we've discovered along the way, hobbies that fill us with joy, relationships that wove in and out of our lives over time, the many nights we slept with a roof over our head and food to eat, promotions or new jobs that moved us forward, and the setbacks that possibly turned out to be the steppingstones to a better or more focused life. Even when we're going through a rough season, there are always things to be thankful for. Jesus consistently thanked His Father, even as He was tested, even as He suffered. Regardless of His circumstances, Jesus thanked God for being there, for His gifts and His purpose, and for always providing exactly what Jesus needed to accomplish what He was meant to do.

Now, it's your turn to give thanks. Take a seat and reflect on what you have to be grateful for today and throughout your lifetime. Write it all down. Make a list for today and for poignant events in the past. What has happened in your life that truly changed it for the better? What in your life are you grateful for that gave you joy? What prayers has God answered in your lifetime? What unexpected twists in your past are you grateful for now that might have seemed like a setback when they happened? What are you grateful for in this moment of time, in your life right now?

As you go through the rest of your week, try to maintain that gracious attitude. Continue to be aware of what there is to appreciate in your life. When you think of something new, send God a quick prayer of thanks. It will help you start taking on a new outlook of gratitude.

BONUS!

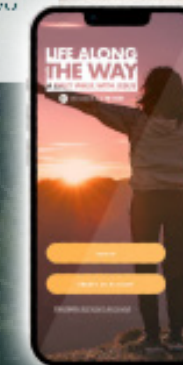
Servant School

is a faith-based media learning site that works in conjunction with the Life Along the Way series, offering courses on the basics of walking as a follower of Jesus. Utilizing the foremost experts in the fields of biblical study, theology/apologetics, spiritual formation, leadership, Wesleyan heritage, and faith & wellness.

Created in a brain-friendly format of 8 to 12 minute video segments, the courses can be taught in Sunday school, small groups, at home, or via extended studies. Each course contains both leader and student handouts, and there is even a support course for teaching excellence. All our courses can be used for group teaching or individual growth, and we seek scholars from across our focus areas to develop courses.



Servant School also offers mini-courses and interviews with biblical scholars to supplement the reader's understanding of the life of Christ as it is explored in Life Along the Way.



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