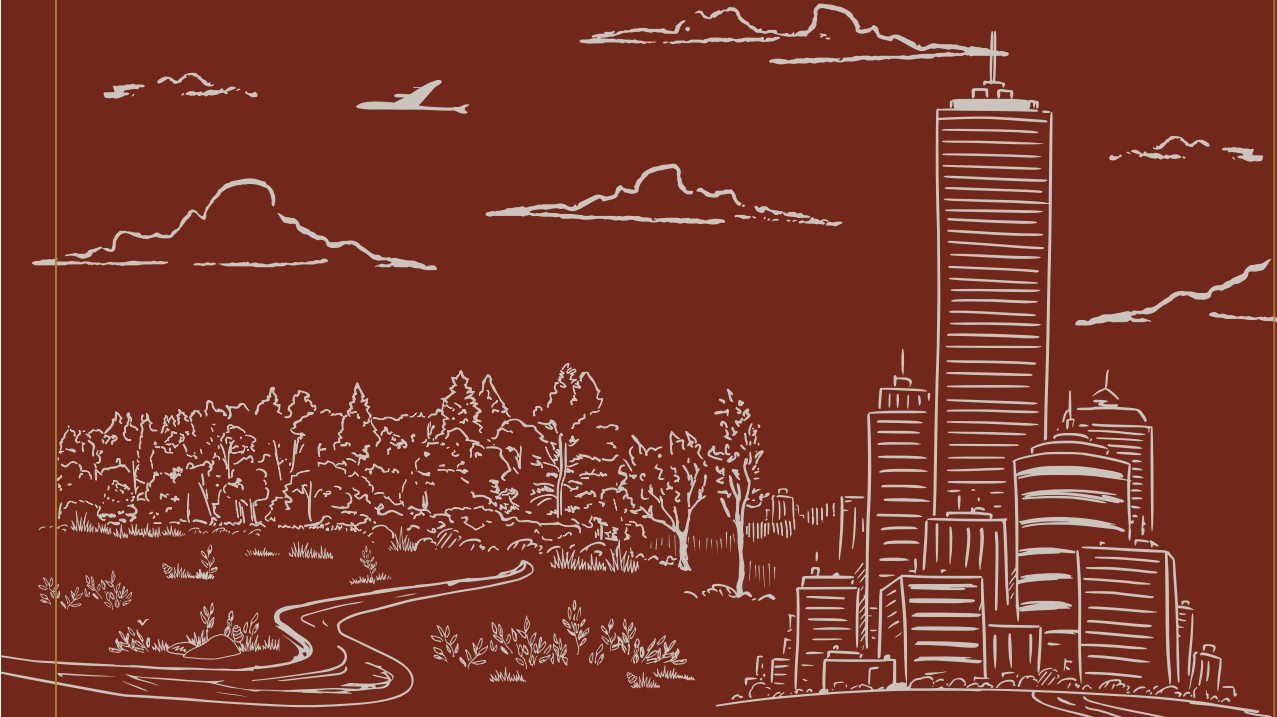


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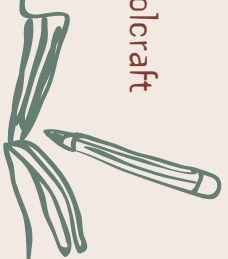


COMMUNITIES OF HOPE



YEAR | TWO

Written and edited by Justin Schoolcraft
and Rev. Dr. Brandon Winstead



**Meet the Co-Author,
Rev. Dr. Brandon Winstead**



Let me, Pastor Justin, introduce you to my friend, Brandon. Brandon is currently a resident of Tallahassee, Florida. He and I share a common Alma Mater, Trevecca Nazarene University in Nashville, TN. Brandon earned his Master of Divinity from Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City and his PhD from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in the greater Chicago area. He has served in youth ministry, teaching ministries, and academic settings throughout the country in both Nazarene and Methodist communities, and is currently involved at Bethel AWE of Tallahassee. Brandon started the Six8 Fellowship for teenagers at Trevecca Nazarene University, a dynamic program that paired theological education with hands-on learning throughout the Nashville area. Brandon and I met when I joined the staff of Six8 in 2018, where our friendship and ministry partnership began. Considering Brandon's extensive background in Wesleyan theology, I called in his support for this project, and I can't wait for you to get to know him better through the pages of this journal.

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A SPECIAL WELCOME

from Jaime Kernaghan, Small Group Specialist



WELCOME TO YEAR 2! We are so glad to walk this continued journey of connection and growth with you. As you know, there are countless others just like you who desire to be a part of a community and share life together.

There are no requirements to fulfill, other than to simply show up! In showing up, we hope you will discover the power of being present with others, sharing your heart, and learning to be vulnerable. This journal was written with you in mind. It is a simple way to engage Scripture, have meaningful discussions, and provide daily practices to grow in your faith. Like anything in life, you will get out of it what you give to it, and we believe you will receive what you are looking for and need in this process. May you grow in a way that continues to spark the goodness of God in all those around you. When you continue to seek more, may you find it in one another and the organic connection that grows from the pursuit of the hope only God can provide.

Here's one tangible goal we have for you in Year 2. Last year, our hope was that your group bonded sufficiently so that you were well equipped to serve together. Count it as a big success if, in the process of serving, you were able to look around at your group members and say, "Hey, I know who these people are! I know their stories and what makes them tick." This year, we encourage you to keep serving with your group, but we especially hope that as you do, you can look at the people you are *serv*ing and say the same thing – that you know them, their stories, and what makes them tick. In short, for Year 1, the goal was that you **knew the people you were serving with**. Now, in Year 2, we're going to look outwards in the hopes that you will **know the people you serve**.

Thank you for your willingness to be part of this group, to be accountable for yourself and others, and to rely on one another to change the world, one small group at a time. Thank you for participating with us to help others feel welcome, have a safe place to belong, and to know that they have been found!

We are so grateful for you!

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope." –Romans 15:13



FROM BLESSING TO HOPE

The Journey of the Year 2 Small Group Journal

~Pastor Justin Schoolcraft

When you first became a Christian – if you can even remember that moment – I wonder if you were captured by visions and dreams? The Bible has an affinity for visions and dreams. It tells of images and songs that flood the imaginations of unexpected people after they have an encounter with the mysterious God. We see such experiences in the story of Jacob and his dream of a ladder climbing to the heavens in Genesis 28, in Joel 2 as the prophet paints a picture of a day when God will pour out the Spirit upon all people, and in Acts 10 as Peter sees a vision of God's radical inclusion of every nation through images of multicultural foods. When you were still a new believer, what visions and dreams of God did you have? Can you remember?

Perhaps you had visions of a community called the Church. Perhaps you saw in dreams vague images of your self as you traveled across the many stages of your life, traversing through the joys, pains, and surprises that make up your earthly time and existence. It would come as no surprise if you had dreams of this nature, because it speaks to a shared hope that Christians have: that through the chaos of this life, what can remain steady and stable is a people called the Church who love us, care for us, know us deeply, and want to be known themselves. The Church is a community where we long to find our identity across the decades as we comfort one another in loss, celebrate our joys, make a difference in the world, welcome strangers, and worship. Especially when we first come to believe, we dream of a community oriented towards the sacred calling of life in God. It speaks to our deepest hopes of a life well lived.

The reality, though, is that for many of us, a community like this feels more like the dreams of a distant past than a real place in the world. Somewhere along the way, life hit us. We grew up, took on responsibility, and lost touch with the childhood wonder that propelled us onward into the unknown. Perhaps doubts developed, relationships broke, or the holiness of a role model was exposed as a false pretense. Now – as an adult Christian – you're still here, you're still trying, you're still looking for that community... but maybe it feels as if the dream is nothing but a dream.



The journal you are holding will lead you on a journey of wrestling with these visions of hopeful community. It takes seriously that all of us begin our Christian journey with good intentions of belonging to a community that fills our life with meaning and blesses the world. But it also takes seriously that living out our faith is rarely that easy. Hardships emerge and our hearts can grow cold. Uncertainty arises, and in the time we need people at our side the most, we may feel lonely, even in the Church. At many points we can find ourselves asking – *where is that community I thought I was giving my life to?*

The main ideas you'll encounter this year speak to the disconnect between the communities we want and the communities we have, all while holding before us the possibility for churches to reclaim hope-filled visions and dreams. This year builds on the first year of your small group journey. In Year 1, you explored how God's people throughout history have faced the temptation to hoard power and security for themselves rather than bless others. Becoming a *community of blessing* requires a steadfast trust that God will provide what you need when you share what you have, and a basic knowledge of your life story so that you can discern the way you are uniquely called to participate in such a community. When a community lives out this mission of blessing others, the whole world looks upon it like a city on a hill, a beacon of light in the midst of darkness. Now in Year 2, you'll see that it takes hard work to stay committed to God's mission of blessing others, and that many communities give up on this mission quickly. There are real forces in the world – we'll define them as boundaries and limitations – that take root in our heart, leaving little room for hope. We'll see that the endgame of these boundaries and limitations is a deeply-rooted cynicism that sees no potential for the world's betterment. Cynicism, as we'll discuss, works in our lives to slowly erode the hopes and dreams we have for the world.

But we'll also see that God has dreams, too – and what God dreams, God does. God's dreams for the world are of a redeemed creation and a redeemed humanity that stands confidently in grace, truth, and love for all eternity. God intends to bring about this New Creation, not unilaterally, but in partnership with the humans God created. This is God's promise: that an active partnership in the work of New Creation gives us the confidence and security we need to see hope in the world, even when human efforts fail. Hope, as we'll see, is the active response to the promises of God. But hope is also a *discipline* we must practice. It takes consistency and patience in the rhythms of the Christian faith to *resist cynicism and practice hope*.





Here's what to expect on this journey:

In the **PURPOSE** section, we'll travel with Joseph of the Old Testament as he grapples with one of the key forces that works against our faith: *boundaries*. Joseph, at every turn, chooses to be a hopeful boundary-crosser in his partnership with God to bring the New Creation. Joseph's faithful decisions emerged from a spirit shaped by disciplines, and we'll see that living into the Five Essential Practices of the Christian faith gives us the foundation we need, like Joseph, to live into our sacred purpose of crossing the boundaries of our lives.

In the **BELONGING** section, we'll meet and then journey with the founder of the Methodist movement, John Wesley. John Wesley built a movement on the conviction that God is calling communities to *resist cynicism and practice hope* as they live into a dynamic partnership with God in bringing the New Creation. But Wesley's vision for communities of hope did not emerge overnight; we'll meet him at major moments of his life, filled with the conflicts, failures, and celebrations that forged the person he was. Wesley knew that he *belonged* to a bigger story of God's redemption – and it changed everything about how he lived.

Finally, in the **GROWTH** section, we'll conclude the small group journey by exploring group meeting habits that we can live into for as long as a group sticks together. The Book of Revelation and its hopeful vision of a New Creation will take center stage, but the underlying goal of this section is to practice ways the group can keep meeting indefinitely.

Lastly, as a reminder, this small group journey is meant to foster *character over competence*. The goal for small group discipleship is of a renewed heart that evidences the Fruit of the Spirit. Therefore, this small group is not just a Bible study, nor is learning information the primary goal. Instead, what we are after is Christian character, which comes most fully, as John Wesley believed, when we open our lives in vulnerable but safe ways to other believers who have our best interest at heart.

The God who called you still wants to give you visions and dreams – dreams of *communities of hope* partnering to usher in the New Creation. This dream is not just a dream – its initiation lies with the people whom you call fellow small group members, and its fulfillment lies on the other side of the boundaries and limitations that hold you back.

And that is reason to be hopeful.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Logistics of the Group Meetings

This material will be familiar to you from last year. If you wish, take a moment to review.

Logistics of the Group Meetings

1. Each week will have a lesson. Because it is our desire to eliminate as much pre-work as possible, our recommendation to you is to actually read the lesson aloud during your group time. You can do this by going around in a circle with each person reading a paragraph. The lessons are not long, and while it may feel different at first, you will get used to this practice quickly.

2. Having said that, some weeks will have a recommended "to-do" activity before you arrive at that session. This work is not essential. Sometimes it will be as simple as scanning a QR code and watching a short video. Most of the time, the recommendation is only that you read the "Focus Scriptures" ahead of time. On weeks in which this pre-work is included, it will be identified at the top of the lesson.

3. This journal has been written to promote shared ownership of the group time. There is not a separate version of this journal just for leaders. Therefore, it will not always be obvious who is supposed to lead a certain section of a lesson plan. While your group has a designated leader who can fulfill that role, the goal here is for participants to naturally step up and lead as the lesson plan progresses.

4. You will see reflections from Resurrection staff members and congregants throughout the pages of the journal. It would make the most sense to read these wonderful insights on your own rather than read them aloud during the group meeting.

A Guide to Respectful Participation

And now we remind you of best practices for engaging with your group. Some of these practices may seem obvious, but it never hurts to review before you begin.

Commitments to live by:

Confidentiality: Do not share outside the group what was shared inside the group, except when absolutely necessary for one's personal safety. ▶▶

Support: Root for the other members of your group, whether that be the development of their spiritual life, professional life, or personal life. This is especially important if and when opinions differ.

Contribution and Attendance: Make an effort to contribute to the group. This means allowing participation to be a priority, thoughtfully listening and responding to fellow group members, and sharing in the work of community-building at Resurrection.

Respect: Listen to each other; be mindful of the impact of your words, limit use of devices while others speak, and share the metaphorical microphone.

Spiritual Growth: Your involvement is about more than socialization. Socializing is great! But your group should strive to *grow spiritually* with your time together and jointly pursue the Christian life. (But you'll have lots of fun as you do that!)

Tips for Sharing

A group builds trust when it feels safe for everyone to have a chance to talk. Early on as a group forms, sometimes waiting to speak a second time until everyone has had a chance to talk is helpful.

Comments that are thoughtful but concise can encourage others to talk. Likewise, comments that are significantly off-topic can shut conversation down.

Try to gauge the comfort level of a group. Sharing comments that are weightier than the group is ready for can cause a feeling of disconnect. Let the group *build* to that comfort level rather than trying to force it.

A sense of belonging happens when everyone feels like their words matter. When someone shares, it is very helpful to acknowledge their words with simple phrases such as "thank you for sharing" or "I'm glad you shared that." As a rule, don't allow someone's comment to be met by total silence.

Balanced participation is a goal, but not mandatory – some participants rely on other group members to keep the conversation going. If you don't want to speak about a particular topic, you always have permission to take a pass. Sharing is not required or forced. Never feel embarrassed to take a pass, and give grace to those who do so.



You commit to these standards when you join a small group at Resurrection. Group leaders may have a one-on-one conversation if a member of a group is not meeting these guidelines for the sake of graceful accountability and Christian growth. These guidelines help us live out our purpose to become deeply committed Christians.

Tips for Participating in an Online Small Group

As a rule, leave your camera on. The goal is to engage rather than just listen.

Lighting should be in front of you rather than behind you. When a light source is behind you, it significantly darkens your face.

Did you know that most people focus on their own camera image during online meetings rather than that of the other participants? We all do it! Try to keep your eyes on your other members rather than the image of yourself during small group.

Unless directed by your leader, leave your mic on mute when you aren't speaking.

That being said, it can be helpful to make an effort to unmute your mic to validate another group member's comments when they speak. Again, try not to let anyone's comments go unrecognized. This takes a little more effort in an online group.



NOTES



PART TWO



BELONGING

For thousands of years now, Christians have been trying to “get” the Bible. American churches have innumerable Bible study options, and publishers crank out an unfathomable amount of Bible curriculum every year. In fact, if you go to seminary, you’ll learn how to understand Scripture, putting passages in context so that you can draw out the “meaning” of the text, a process called *exegesis*. Needless to say, for students and laypeople alike, the desire to understand the Bible has been strong since the dawn of Christianity.

This desire to “get” the Bible and its stories is interesting, because it is highly likely that our Jewish and Hebrew forebears – who had the bulk of our Scriptures before we ever did – did not engage the stories of the Bible exactly in this manner. Instead, their focus was on the living God who interacted with the characters who would go on to star in these stories. The story of the Bible, as they engaged it, stood both outside and inside of them, giving them visions and dreams, showing them a purpose, forming a people to whom they could belong. This is what the Bible did for them, and it all boils down to this little saying:

For them, the hope was not that they would “get” the story of the Bible – but that the story of the Bible would “get” them.

Wouldn’t it be interesting if that were our hope, too? That the stories we read in Scripture would grab us, show us where to go, and interpret our lives rather than ask us to interpret them? It’s a more true approach to the story of God. The story of God “gets” us. It captivates us, sweeps us off our feet, and interprets the many layers of our lives.

In this section, we are going to grapple with what it means to belong to a story. We started this work last year in the Belonging section. We considered that, in order to really find our place in a community, we have to understand how our stories belong to God’s story. This goal led us on a journey of reflection over our personal life stories, as well as the story of God. The goal for this second year, though, is to let God’s story reach out and “get” us. We’ll see that one of the Bible’s dominant themes – the New Creation – is a story of God’s ministry at work in our hearts to totally reorient how we are living.

In this section we will journey with John Wesley, founder of the Methodist movement. We are setting off on this adventure with Mr. Wesley because he was living into the story of God’s New Creation. That story had “gotten” him. Because Wesley **belonged** to the story of God’s New Creation, it propelled him into the nifty-gritty work of living in community

as he led people towards a vision of redemption. Wesley discovered that the best way to anticipate the New Creation was to be a part of a community instilled with hope, a hope that was more powerful than the boundaries or limitations that make human life difficult. As we travel with him, we’ll see the ways in which he resisted cynicism, a force in the world that wants humans to accept the world as is rather than as it could be. Our desire is for you to see how the very real community to which you belong could begin to practice hope and become something bigger than the sum of its parts – namely, a *community of hope*.

Before you begin, there are a couple of logistical and biographical notes to consider. At the beginning of each lesson are “Focus Scriptures.” You are encouraged to read these ahead of time. These Scriptures will show up in the discussion questions, putting the lesson you read in conversation with pertinent passages from the Bible. It’s not essential that you read them beforehand, but it would likely improve your time together. Finally, this section relies heavily upon a number of primary and secondary historical sources, including John Wesley’s writings. However, I am indebted most fully to Richard Heitzenrater’s *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* (2nd Edition, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013). Though he is never quoted directly, and though this source was but one of many, Heitzenrater’s work contributed greatly to laying out the overall “roadmap” of Wesley’s life. Interested readers are encouraged to pick up this book.

May the story of God’s New Creation “get you” more than you “get it.”



CHAPTER ONE

A FAITHFUL WOMAN'S EXAMPLE

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: GALATIANS 3:26-28

*During the Belonging section, you are encouraged to read the Focus Scriptures ahead of time, though it is not essential. You will not see these verses appear directly in the lesson content, but in each lesson you will find a question called **Connect the Dots**. These questions will ask you to make connections between the Focus Scripture and the lesson from the day.*

ICE BREAKER:

Finish this sentence. In high school, I was the person who _____.

CHECK IN:

Highs and Lows

KEY TERM

Limitations: realities of brokenness, oftentimes far outside our control, that press in on us and make our lives difficult.

ORIENTING

To be a boundary-crossing disciple is to be on a journey towards God's New Creation. This journey, though, is not easy, as we rub up against the limitations of our finite world and our vulnerable selves. We find that we must belong to a story greater than ourselves and practice that story within a community of blessing. In this *BELONGING* section, your group will explore the life of John Wesley, looking at how he resisted cynicism and practiced hope amidst boundaries and limitations. Wesley had a dynamic partnership with God to bring about the New Creation, and that partnership changed everything.

LESSON

Churches everywhere were splitting. Politicians were losing their grounding in traditional moral and religious narratives and were embracing chaotic narratives of narcissism. Small bands of religious fervor were spreading, but those communities were oftentimes dismissed as backward thinking and fanatical. Everywhere you looked, the citizens put their ultimate hope in the strength of the nation, and fought bitterly about how to practice their national power for the good – not of the public – but of their personal ideological tribe.

Sound familiar? It might, but what we are talking about is England in the 1700s. In order to understand this political storm, though, we have to wind the clock back hundreds of years to the 15th and 16th Centuries. Roman Catholicism had been the state religion of England for generations. Over time, though, monarchs in England began feuding with whoever the pope (the leader of Roman Catholicism) was at the time. England's leaders became swept up in a broad effort to protect its national identity over and against other empires (an irony, considering England's willingness to colonize other nations' unique identities). In the 1530s, Henry VIII worked with Parliament to issue the Acts of Supremacy, which severed England from Roman Catholicism and created the independent Church of England. This new church's practice reflected England's preference to maintain its own unique national identity while still retaining pieces of Catholicism. It was a far-reaching political change.

With this political change came fights over religion. There were those who welcomed this new church and its embrace of both a uniquely English identity and pieces of Catholicism that had been foundational for centuries. But there were some, influenced by religious reform in France, who believed the church needed to be reformed even more, purified of anything not based in Scripture (the Puritans). In reality, these efforts were intended to purge all Catholic tendencies from the church. The Puritan influence spread rapidly across England until, in the early 1600s, a military venture defeated King Charles I, who was thought to have Catholic leanings. For the next 10 years, England was without a king.

In the midst of that 10-year power vacuum, new ideas flourished. People questioned if religion was really necessary at all. When a new king, Charles II, was finally named, the nation was split. Conservatives wanted a strong king to come back and make the church relevant again. Progressives either wanted no religion or a reformed religion. The politicians in Parliament, following this divide in religion, became entrenched in a rigid two-party system. It became so bad that in subsequent years, when one radical king was forced out of office and another ruling couple (William and Mary) were invited to rule, no one could agree if William and Mary had won the right to rule fairly, and disagreement over who was truly king threatened chaos.

It is in this context of chaos that we turn our attention to a blossoming family, the Wesleys, in the early 1700s. Samuel and Susanna Wesley lived in Epworth, England, where Samuel pastored a congregation. Together they had 10 children and lived in the church parsonage. Samuel, an intellectual and poet, was a faithful father but frequently found himself in financial trouble and struggled to connect with the unschooled congregants in his church. ▶▶

Susanna excelled at educating her children. She taught reading, Latin, Greek, and classic literature to her children and was admired by her family. On the outside, this family appeared like many families. They were a couple working together to find fulfilling work, make an honest living, connect meaningfully in community, and raise successful children. They believed in Christ and sought to follow him, putting their faith into practice as Christians everywhere sought to do.



~ Susanna Wesley
Letter to John, July 24, 1732

But on the inside, we find a family who rubbed up against limitations. Samuel and Susanna, though they agreed on their Christian outlook, discovered that life is never so simple as knowing what you believe and then living it out. There were complications, obstacles, and conflicts that beset their daily lives. Samuel and Susanna could not agree on who the true King of England was, and it caused a rift in their marriage. Their home burned down multiple times, possibly due to congregants angry at Samuel, leaving the family in debt. Furthermore, frequent pregnancy loss left a shroud of grief over their lives (Susanna birthed 19 children in total, but only 10 survived infancy). Add all those things to a context of national chaos, and it becomes understandable why their desire to live the Christian life was more complicated than idealized intentions.

We find this to be true in our lives, too. In Part 1, we considered the impact of man-made boundaries on our lives of faith, things that keep us separate from and may cause harm to others for the purpose of protecting and ordering our own lives apart from the intentions of God. In this section, we are going to consider another kind of obstacle to our faith, **limitations**. For our purposes, limitations are realities of brokenness, oftentimes far outside our control, that press in on us and make our lives difficult. There could be a friend who has turned his back on you. There could be a diagnosis that keeps you up at night. Or maybe it's a dream left unfulfilled. These limitations impact our walk with God. Partnering with God in the New Creation, then, is an act of hope that moves past not just manmade boundaries, but also limitations not of our own making.

Susanna Wesley models for us what it means to transcend both boundaries and limitations,

and she had plenty of each. Outside her home was political turmoil; inside her home was grief, financial trouble, and the heavy load of raising ten children. But she was a bold disciple who had her hopes set on something higher than these challenges – the New Creation that God wanted to bring. She refused to believe that there was no potential for positive change in her life and the world. To really be a person defined by God's redemptive work rather than the world's brokenness, she had to step out in faith beyond what she knew to be possible, trusting in God's ability to write a new story. One story illustrates her bold faith particularly well.

In England, any religious organization led by a dissenter (a person who disputed the king's legitimacy to the throne) had to register his or her house of worship. Though not a formal religious leader, Susanna was a dissenter, and she and Samuel fought about it bitterly – so much so that Samuel left the home for about a year. In his absence, Susanna felt that the preacher left in charge of the congregation was inadequate, so she started to conduct her own religious services in the parsonage. Her eclectic gatherings of worship contained people of all economic, political, and religious backgrounds. These meetings grew to 200 people! The simple messages she gave, the hymns, and the readings from Scripture in the company of a diverse audience resonated with everyone in her care. Samuel caught word that Susanna was doing this and became enraged as he knew his wife would need to register herself as a dissenting religious leader, and that church officials would criticize Samuel for being married to such a rebel. However, Susanna conveniently (willfully?) “forgot” to register herself, and kept leading these New Creation services blissfully under the radar.

Susanna took a risk, believing that what was more powerful than religious and political chaos and the troubles of her home life was the active movement of a God who transcended the boundaries and limitations of the world. She trusted that God could use her and responded to that promise, therefore finding an essential part of a faith that endures: **hope**.

This part of the small group journal is about the hopeful life of John Wesley, one of Susanna's ten children, but we begin by acknowledging that John learned this hopeful lifestyle from his mother. She took bold moves – risky moves – and her leadership would later inspire her son to start a movement. But really, this story is about you and me. Do we have this hope? Do we take leaps of faith, trusting in God's ability to bring New Creation? Do we trust that God is able to use us in creative and powerful ways, despite our limitations, if we trust in him? Or do we do what many people do, which is to embrace cynicism, a belief that nothing will ultimately change in the world? This journey with John Wesley will lead us to consider the necessity for hope in our lives. Hope is a practice we engage in by actively trusting and responding to God's promise to bring the New Creation in partnership with us. But becoming a hopeful person is not something you will do alone. You will have the example of Wesley and the support of the people at your side.

Group Discussion

1. What are some connections you see between today’s political landscape and England’s political landscape in the time of the Wesleys?

2. In the lesson, we defined a “limitation” as a reality of brokenness, oftentimes far outside our control, that presses in on us and makes our lives difficult. How do the limitations in your life, both personal (sickness, grief, etc) and social (the current social and political environment, for example) affect you in ways that are at least partially beyond your control?

3. Think of your small group meetings. What limitations are present in your lives that make consistently engaging in your small group a challenge? Time? Energy? A physical limitation, even?

4. BEDROCK.

We also see from Susanna’s story that one of the ways we practice hope is to trust that God can still find creative ways to use us despite the limitations we face, be it sickness, capacity, or grief. Who is a person in your life who faced a tremendous limitation but still displayed hope? Did they ever come to mind when you faced a limitation of your own?



“I never thought that living out my faith would be as challenging as it has been over the last few years. Throughout my life, I have always been able to maneuver through hurt, disappointments, tragedies, and grief. Relying on my faith had become my way of life while weathering through my fair share of storms and tragedies! However, the grief of losing my daughter, Keisha, was shattering, and it shook everything I knew and believed about my faith. It broke me apart, leading to spiritual searching, skepticism, and anger. But I found that my anger and indifference were a case for lament. Lament is how we cry out to God and express our sorrow and disappointment, trusting all the while that God is faithful. As I wrestled with lament, I learned that I could hold onto God and the suffering and grief I experience. Through lament, God met me where I am, and helped me to not only survive, but live a life of service to others in Keisha’s memory. God continued to use me - and my daughter - despite profound grief.”

~Carla Smocks

5. **CONNECT THE DOTS.**

In today’s focus scripture, Galatians 3:26-28, St. Paul (the author of that book) reminds us that those who find their identity in Christ are “one.” Christ followers aren’t divided into categories. In the lesson today, how do you see Susanna Wesley – despite the boundaries and limitations she faced – acting on this unity in Christ? What risks did she take? What risks would it take for you to do the same?

6. **WHAT WOULD YOU DO?**

In each lesson that follows John Wesley’s story, there will be a question that asks you to consider what you would do given one of the circumstances a character (or side character) in the story faced. When you answer these questions, consider how difficult, but also rewarding, it can be to cross boundaries or transcend limitations in your life.

You’re employed by the English government at the turn of the 18th Century. You catch word that a minister’s wife named Susanna is having illegal religious meetings in her home. What would you do?

CLOSING PRAYER



