



EVERLASTING

A 4-WEEK STUDENT DISCIPLESHIP JOURNAL

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO:



Making Disciples...Developing Leaders

Everlasting: A 4-Week Student Discipleship Journal

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25W560 Geneva Road, Suite 30
Carol Stream, IL 60188

www.leadertreks.com
877-502-0699

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STARTING NOW

Imagine you and your friends got one of those giant, industrial-sized rolls of toilet paper from your school to roll out in one long line. You roll it down the hallways of the school and out the door. It doesn't take long to roll it through the parking lot and across the football field. And with quite a bit left, you cross the street and roll it down the first block. Eventually, several blocks away, your roll ends. Now imagine that at the very beginning of the roll, back where you started, there's a tiny dot that someone made with a ballpoint pen. It's so small and so many blocks away that, unless you crouched down right above it, you wouldn't even see it.

That dot represents your life here on earth. The rest of your life—eternity—is like the entire roll of toilet paper. It goes on and on and on. Your first 70 years or so is that small dot.

You see, when we start following Christ, we start the beginning of forever. Not forever like a bus ride that won't end. But forever like how you felt on the very best day of your life stretched out over eternity. *Everlasting* means we know how the story ends. It means everything wrong in your life doesn't have the final say. *Everlasting* means we get to be friends with the God of the universe who is crazy about us. *Everlasting* means that we live forever—starting with the first little dot here on earth.

HOW IT WORKS



This book has four weeks of journal pages to help you journey down the road of everlasting life—whether you are just getting started or have been walking that journey for some time. Each week takes you through six days of questions to get you thinking, Bible studies to shift your perspective, and challenges to stretch you out of your comfort zone. Then, on the seventh day of the week, you'll get a break to recharge for the next section. It'll help you get into a rhythm of learning, growing, and putting that knowledge into action.

Throughout this journal, you'll also find the MARKS OF A DISCIPLE. These are things that Christ-followers are committed to and have in common, like connecting with God through prayer, applying his Word to our lives, serving without personal agendas, managing God's gifts, and many other things.



Remember, you'll get out of this book what you put into it. The challenges you'll encounter won't always be easy—they're designed to stretch you! Take a risk and do your best to engage each day with energy and passion. When we make ourselves available to God, he'll transform us and use us in ways that will blow our minds!

WEEK ONE LOVE

DAY ONE

**FOR GOD SO LOVED THE
WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS
ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT
WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM
SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT
HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE.
JOHN 3:16 (NIV)**

INTRO

Have you ever climbed a mountain, seen the perfect sunset, and tried to capture it on camera? Maybe you stopped to take several pictures so you could pick the best one to post on social media and make everyone jealous about where you were. But when you look back through your photos, you discover they don't do the actual sunset any justice at all.

A tiny, two-dimensional square never seems to capture your original experience. It's impossible to contain the vast spectrum of the sky in a box. You just can't replicate the feeling you get when you watch the sun sink down and breathe in the cool fresh air, surrounded by God's orange-glow filter. The picture may remind you of that moment, but it will never immerse your senses in the actual sunset experience.

Sometimes we look at God's love through a tiny, two-dimensional square. Maybe we heard about it, memorized a few verses, or sang songs about it. All these things remind us how God's love feels. But to really know God's love, we have to take the time to immerse ourselves in it. We have to pause and come face to face with him, letting our guards down, removing our sunglasses, and taking it all in.

In the journey of following Christ, sometimes we give God's love only a quick glance—like flipping through a few snapshots—before jumping into all the things Christians should and shouldn't do. But over the next week, you'll start with climbing the mountain. Take in the full experience of God's love like you would a sunset. The rest of the journey hinges on it.

DAY ONE GET A GLIMPSE

Whether you're just starting down the road of following Christ or you've been walking down the road for a while now, a glimpse of God's love puts everything into perspective. It can stop you in your tracks, like a breathtaking view you just have to stop and admire. God's love is written all over our lives if we stop to read it.

Without a doubt, Jesus sacrificing himself on the Cross was an incredible act of love. (We'll go deeper into that in Week 3.) That image comes to mind when reading John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life" (NKJV).

But God's love was obvious long before that moment.

Jesus lived among us for three decades before the Cross; that alone shows his love. In fact, John 13:1 says that when he served his disciples by washing their feet he showed "the full extent of his love." Or what about all the things he created for us to simply enjoy, like music, animals, colors, and taste—not to mention his Word that he left us so we could always know how he feels about us. Spend some time thinking about the different ways we can see God's love by answering the following questions.



➤ Name one person who loves you. What are some of the ways that person shows you love?

➤ How do you know if you love someone or something?

➤ Think about the unique things God did to prepare earth before the first human ever walked on it, from creating trees for oxygen to inventing colors we can enjoy. What is one thing you think God created with you in mind, and why?

➤ How does the Bible show you God's love?

➤ Have you ever doubted that God loves you?* Why?

**Many Christ-followers doubt God's love from time to time. If this is you right now, talk to God about it. Ask him to show you his love, and talk to someone who is further down the road in their faith. Over the next several weeks, you'll encounter different Bible verses and activities that will hopefully give you a bigger picture of God's love.*

DAY TWO

GOD'S LOVE STORY

Have you ever been frustrated by a TV series or a movie that leaves you hanging. The main character is in an epic battle or about to get life-changing news, when the words "To be continued ..." flash on the screen. The producers force you to wait until the next season or a sequel to know what happens. And in the meantime, fans generate a million different theories. People go to great lengths to figure out what the screenwriters are going to do. The only thing worse than waiting is finding out there will be no conclusion because the show got cancelled!

This is so frustrating because we love to know how things end. Remember the comforting phrase, "And they all lived happily ever after"? We love a fitting ending to a great story.

There's good news for Christ-followers: we know how God's love story ends. He doesn't leave us guessing about how to find our "happily ever after." He wants us to rest in his love and promises. The Bible makes it clear how history will one day conclude. Following Christ leads to everlasting life without death, pain, fatigue, or frustrations. Imagine the best day you've ever had. Everlasting life with Christ is better than that day, every day!

THE BIBLE WAS WRITTEN BY LOTS OF PEOPLE, BUT IT WAS ALSO WRITTEN BY GOD. IT'S MADE UP OF STORIES, LETTERS, JOURNALS, SONGS, AND HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS OF WHAT JESUS SAID AND DID DURING HIS MINISTRY. THE BIBLE IS GOD-BREATHED: HE PROVIDED THE WORDS AND EXPERIENCES, AND THE PEOPLE WHO FOLLOWED HIM PROVIDED THE PENS AND PERSPECTIVES.

TAKE THIS CHALLENGE:

YOU WILL NEED A BIBLE (A STUDY BIBLE IS IDEAL), AND ACCESS TO THE INTERNET. IF YOU'VE NEVER CRACKED OPEN A BIBLE, NOW IS THE TIME TO START.

Your goal today is to find seven different places in the Bible that tell you about God's love. You can search verses about God's love on the Internet, or you can look up "love" in the glossary of your study Bible. Write down the verse reference,* and write down one or two things that stand out to you about God's love from that verse.

HERE ARE TWO VERSES TO GET YOU STARTED: ROMANS 5:8 AND ROMANS 8:37-39.

**Verse References: Bible verses are easy to find with practice. Each verse has a reference that looks something like this: Romans 5:8.*

The Book: Romans

The Chapter: 5

The Verse: 8

The list of books and their page numbers are found in the front of your Bible. Chapters are the large numbers that come every few paragraphs, and verses are tiny numbers inside the text.



**DISCIPLES OF CHRIST BELIEVE THE BIBLE IS
GOD'S WORD. (2 TIM. 3:16-17)**

DAY THREE GET PERSONAL

Did you know the human heart beats an average of 100,000 times in a day? That adds up to 3 billion beats in a lifetime. Nearly 48 million gallons of blood are pumped through the heart over all those years. Your lungs are just as amazing. You breathe 23,000 times a day and process 80 million gallons of air a year. You'll blink your eyes 6 million times over those 365 days to keep the front surfaces of your eyes moist and clean.

Those are just a few ways in which God created you with care and detail. His design is unmatched. Even some of the most skeptical of doctors acknowledge the intelligent design behind the human body.

But that's not all!

God didn't create you while sitting behind a holy computer somewhere far away. He knew you personally when you were still in the womb. God created you and wants you to experience his loving presence your entire life.

READ PSALM 139:13-16

AND USE THE **5P** BIBLE STUDY METHOD TO BETTER UNDERSTAND WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOUR LIFE.

PURPOSE Why do you think the author wrote this? Why is it important enough to be in the Bible? In a sentence or two, write what you think the overall theme or topic is.

PRIMARY VERSE Which verse seems to contain the most important thought in the passage? Which one stands out most to you? Write out the verse completely and the corresponding reference.

PROMISES Make a list of any promises you find. Sometimes you need to infer promises from a passage. For example, John 3:16 does not come right out and promise you heaven. But it implies a promise: "If you believe, you will have eternal life."

PROBLEMS If you find anything you don't understand—even if it's just a word—write it down as a question. Then ask someone for the answer or look it up yourself. One way to know if you have any problems is to ask yourself, "Is there anything in this passage that I could not explain to a friend?"

PRACTICAL APPLICATION Think about what the passage means to you. What action should you take? What do you need to change or work on so that what you have read is real in your life? Be specific—your application should tell who, what, and when.

DAY FOUR CONTAGIOUS LOVE

One cool thing about God's love is how it motivates us to action. It's impossible to spend any genuine time with him without being changed or stirred up. We see this in the life of Jesus; people who encountered him often responded by sharing their encounter with others, worshiping him, following him, serving him, and making radical life changes.

God's love changes us from the inside out. It changes our heart, which changes our actions. But keep in mind that it's not our actions that make him love us; he loved us long before we could do anything to earn his love. Our sacrifices and actions do matter and can make a real difference in the kingdom of God. Yet God is more interested in our hearts. Even if you were hit by a car and stuck in a coma for the rest of your life, God wouldn't love you any less than he loves you right now.

That's worth thinking about. Here is a tough question people have struggled with for centuries:

WHY DO YOU THINK GOD MADE PEOPLE?

Read this quote by T.G. Jalland:

“GOD DID NOT MAKE US BECAUSE HE STOOD TO GAIN FOR THE MAKING. HE MADE US OUT OF SHEER LOVE.”

After reading this quote, think back through that question again. Then answer a few more to get some insight into your relationship with God:

WHY DO YOU THINK GOD MADE PEOPLE?

WHAT DOES GOD THINK OF YOU? WHY?

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF YOU? WHY?

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES GOD'S LOVE MAKE IN YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE?

DAY FIVE INESCAPABLE LOVE

If you're a fish, water is your life. You can't survive without it, nor can you go anywhere (and stay alive) without bumping into it. Maybe you'd rather focus on the cool plastic castle someone placed in your fishbowl, but water matters far more. Unfortunately, you might be so used to the water that you forget it's there.

Just like water to a fish, the love of God is all around us because God is all around us. And just like the fish, we may be bumping into God's love so often that we fail to recognize it. Only by looking for evidence of his love all around us (like bubbles, floating things, and swaying plants reveal water) can we remember that it's always there. As you read through the following Bible passage, think about ways in which God's love shows up all the time in your life.

USE THE OPA BIBLE STUDY METHOD
TO SLOWLY AND INTENTIONALLY SWIM
THROUGH PSALM 103:8-13.

OBSERVATION

Compile all the facts found in these passages. Make 20-30 observations about what you read.

PRINCIPLES

Draw a few principles from the observations you made. What is God trying to teach you in this passage?

APPLICATION

*How will you apply these principles to your life?
Be specific—a good application will tell who, what, and when.*

DAY SIX FOR THE LOVE

God made us, provides for us, and loves us as his unique creations. You know this as a creator yourself—whether building the ultimate ice cream sundae, working on a drawing, creating a fun space for hangout nights, making a short video, or writing music, you create things because you love them! This is a tiny peek into how God loves his creation: us. Even more amazing, out of his love for us, God also created a whole bunch of things for us to enjoy: awesome music, beautiful colors, delicious food. He could have made two boring notes, a grayscale world, and bland food. But he didn't, because he wants us to enjoy life!

TAKE THIS CHALLENGE:

Over the next day or two, carve out some time to focus on creating something you enjoy, from ice cream sundaes to painting on a canvas. Then go one step further and find a way to use that creation to show someone else love. If you love cooking and creating amazing meals, try cooking your favorite meal (or baking a favorite dessert) for your family or friends. If you love making short films, put together a video from pictures from your last family vacation to preserve the memories. If you're into fashion, help your younger sister create outfits that capture her personality for the next week. And if music is your thing, make a playlist for a friend.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO CREATE?

HOW WILL YOU SHOW LOVE TO
SOMEONE THROUGH THIS CREATION?

DAY SEVEN SABBATH

Have you ever heard someone refer to Sunday as the Sabbath? That means it's our day of rest. Sabbath originated in Genesis when God rested on the seventh day of creation.

Today, on the last day of this week, that's your challenge: rest! Take some time to reflect on what you've learned about God's love. Enjoy him. The love of God is transformational. Only when we spend time walking into its fullness can we begin to experience real change from the inside out. The person he created you to be can begin (or continue) to emerge even today.

Spend some time praying and talking with God. Recharge your batteries and refresh your mind.

“BY THE SEVENTH DAY GOD HAD FINISHED THE WORK HE HAD BEEN DOING; SO ON THE SEVENTH DAY HE RESTED FROM ALL HIS WORK.” –GENESIS 2:2

This is a great day to write down any questions you've had over the week, anything that didn't make sense or that you're unsure about. Write them down here, and make some time to ask someone who's a little farther down the road in their faith (maybe even the person who gave you this book).

**“THERE IS NO HUMAN
WRECKAGE, LYING
IN THE OOZE OF THE
DEEPEST SEA OF
INIQUITY, THAT GOD’S
DEEP LOVE CANNOT
REACH AND REDEEM.”**

—JOHN HENRY JOWETT



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