

EVERYONE NEEDS A...

DAWG



- HOW TO INVEST IN A DAY ALONE WITH GOD -

Jack McQueeney



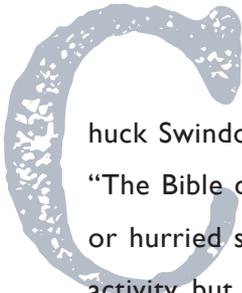
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Jack McQueeney met Christ through The Navigators' collegiate ministry, and joined The Navigators in 1982 as an assistant to then-President Lorne Sanny. Lorne took the time to intentionally mentor Jack, and during that time taught him the importance of spending extended time alone with God. This is a practice Jack has

continued to follow both in his personal life as a husband, father, and grandfather, and in his professional life as the Executive Director of Glen Eyrie and Eagle Lake Camps. As a Certified Life Coach, he is passionate about raising up leaders and helping them grow in their personal walks with the Lord.



huck Swindoll, pastor, Bible teacher, and author once said, “The Bible doesn’t yield its treasures to a lazy, distracted, or hurried soul.” A day alone with God isn’t just another activity, but a privilege that allows you to dwell at length with your Heavenly Father so that He is able to speak personally and lovingly to you. Extended time abiding in God’s presence is not only a gift but a prerogative granted to God’s children! However, few of us know how to spend a day alone with God, and my hope is that this booklet inspires you to give it a try!

Oh, to speak with God face to face, like Moses, and come away from that mountaintop experience with His radiance on our faces. Or to be called “a man after God’s own heart” as David was. God longs to be gracious to us and reveal His presence to us – to me and to YOU! A Day Alone With God creates the physical, emotional, and spiritual space needed to abide at the foot of His throne, hear His voice, and experience His presence and love.

WHAT IS A DAY ALONE WITH GOD?

It's a day set aside to get to know God more intimately. (Yes, it is possible!) It's time to read, listen, pray and discover more about your Father, your identity as His child, and your responsibilities as His follower. It is time dedicated to your relationship with Him, deepening your intimacy with the God who IS love. *James 4:8* says, "Come near to God and He will come near to you."



God called Moses twice (*Exodus 24:12, 34:2*) and Jesus once (*Matthew 4:1*) to spend 40 days alone with Him. Why, then, would we not follow these great men's examples and spend just one day alone with Him?

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HURRIED SOUL.**

-Chuck Swindoll

WHY HAVE A **DAWG?**

The Almighty God, the Creator of the Universe, wants to have an authentic, intimate relationship with YOU! *Isaiah 30:18* [AMP] says, “And therefore the Lord [earnestly] waits [expecting, looking, and longing] to be gracious to you; and therefore, He lifts Himself up, that He may have mercy on you.” Furthermore, He has placed within all of us a longing to know Him that can only be satisfied by time spent in His presence. He’s waiting for you and responds to your desire to know Him.

He is always pursuing you; even when you’re busy or distracted, His focus is always toward relationship with you. To best respond to this, pray, “Help me to be still and train my ears to hear.”



I have found four beneficial by-products from these day retreats with God:

1) A CLEARER PERSPECTIVE

There are times when life is not going in the direction I think it should go. Things may be falling apart or I may just be confused as to what God is doing. As I've read and prayed during my DAWG, it's as though God raises the thick fog bank and I can see forward again. *Job 12:13, 22* says, "But true wisdom and power are found in God; counsel and understanding are his... He uncovers mysteries hidden in darkness; He brings light to the deepest gloom." After a DAWG, my perspective – while not perfect – sharpens and I can better see how God is working.

2) A PERSONAL WORD FROM GOD

There are times in my life as a husband, father, leader, and follower that I just come up short and I need wisdom. During these times, I lean into verses like *Jeremiah 33:3* in which God promises, "Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things which you do not know;" and *Isaiah 55:10-12*, "'My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,' says the Lord, 'And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.'" During a DAWG, I fall on my knees to receive what God has to tell me. As I seek His thoughts and His ways through reading the Bible and listening prayer, I begin to hear that still, small, quiet voice and sense the direction He has for me. God often brings bits of Scripture to mind to teach, rebuke, correct, or train my thoughts, actions, or emotions (*2 Timothy 3:16-17*). It's not always what I like, but it's always what I NEED!



3) REFRESHMENT

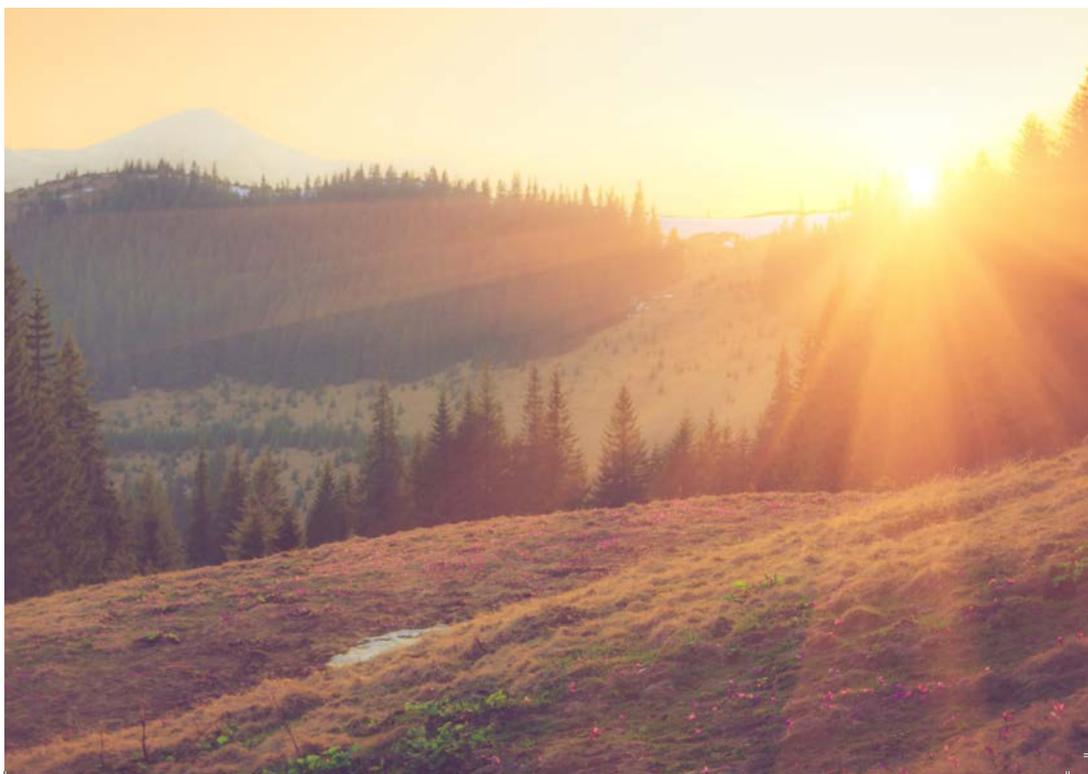
After a period of reflection and repentance, I experience “times of refreshing from the presence of God” (*Acts 3:19*). In *Revelation 21:6*, God says, “To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of the water of life.” I’ve found I best experience this refreshment when I confess and release the sin and subsequent guilt that so easily entangles. During a DAWG, I’m able to experience the grace, forgiveness, and peace only Jesus is able to provide. It’s as though a heavy backpack I’ve been carrying around is lifted off my back, putting new spring into my step and leaving me encouraged and refreshed.

4) DIRECTION MOVING FORWARD

In major life decisions, my wife and I have found it is imperative to spend extended time with God to discover what He has for us. I remember, just like it was yesterday, taking significant time with God and praying over a career decision. As I read my Bible, the same word showed up 8-10 times in my reading! I couldn’t miss the clear direction God was speaking to me. Another time, I asked God for a “new idea” that would expand how we should grow our work. God clearly impressed an idea on me through a promise He revealed to me in His Word, and we have since seen the great fruit of His faithfulness to this promise. (For more on God’s promises, see *Praying Over God’s Promises: The Lost Art of Taking Him at His Word* by Tom Yeakley, NavPress).

God is always in the business of showing up, helping us discover Him and growing us in maturity as we follow His ways. He not only longs for our growth, but He is counting on it. *Ephesians 2:10* states, “We are His masterpieces created anew in Christ Jesus to do the good things He planned for us long ago.” (Wow, think of that! That’s how God views us!) What we believe will determine how we live. As His masterpiece, I believe He wants me to bring my unique beauty, gifts, and talents into those things He has planned for me from the beginning of time. He wants the same for you.

It's my prayer that you'll take time soon to enjoy the benefits of a DAWG and realize new ways to engage with your Heavenly Father as well. Days alone with God have changed my life, and I hope and pray that they will change yours as well.



WHEN IS A --- --- GOOD TIME TO HAVE A DAWG?

If I can work it out, I like blocking out a day at least a month in advance. This helps me look intentionally at my schedule and plan ahead before anything else takes priority. Setting aside this time takes courage and determination. A spiritual mentor once said to me, “Jack, you need to realize you’ll be further ahead by spending this time with God than you would if you were in the office a full day.” That’s why I plan in advance by identifying and blocking this day out in my schedule. I’ve “sacrificed” weekends, holidays, and vacation days during the week because I’ve found that a DAWG is worth the cost of a “free” day. In fact, I believe that DAWGs are so strategic that I ask our Leadership Team and our Leader Community to also dedicate regular time away to purposefully be with God.

There is never going to be a truly convenient time to get away; the enemy will see to that. This is where the courage and determination come in: the courage to sacrifice a day and say no to other things, and the determination to see it through, no matter what comes up. Remember, often the greatest enemy of the “best” is the “good enough.” Do not allow the good – time with friends or family, etc. – to get in the way of the best: time alone with God! Time with Him will only sweeten the time you get with others.



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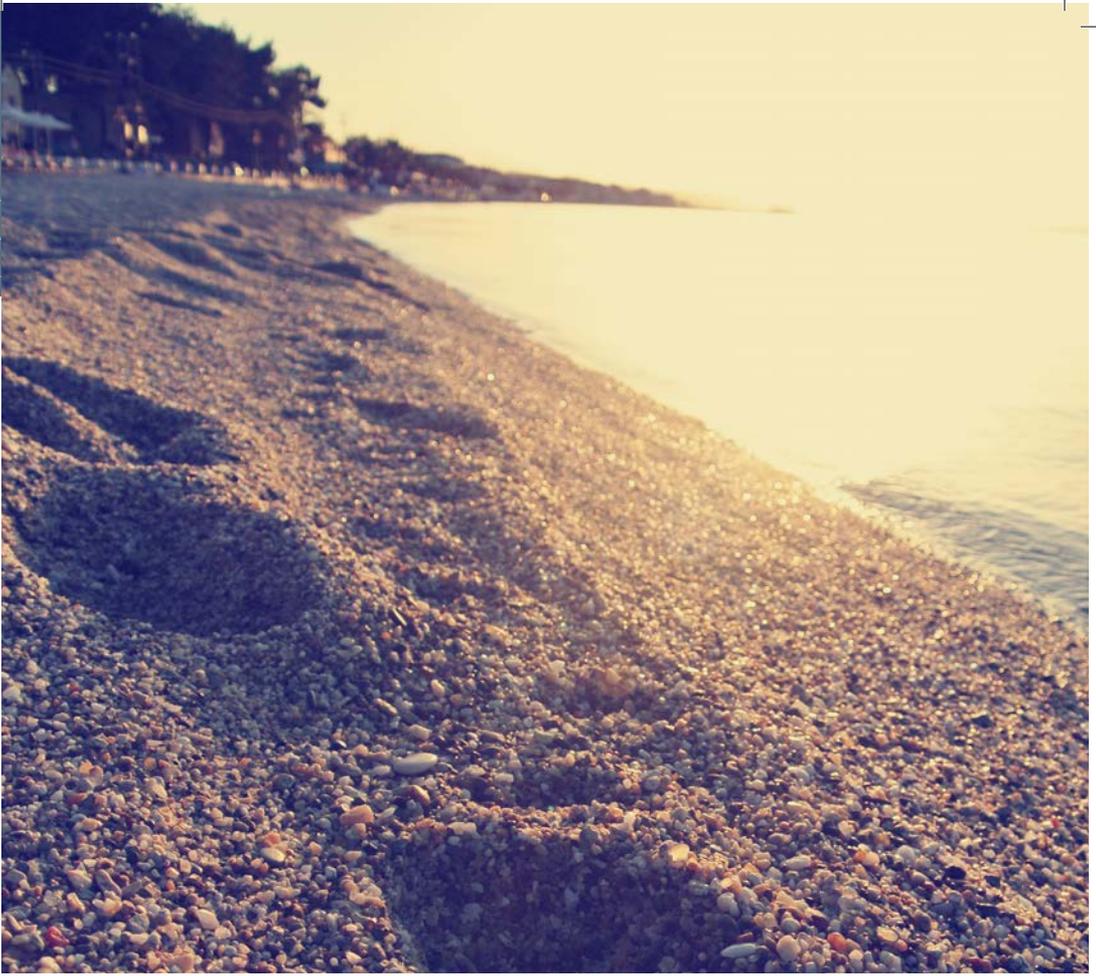
REMEMBER,
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WHERE SHOULD I HAVE A DAWG?

Mark 1:35 says, “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus arose and went off to a lonely place where he prayed.” Jesus modeled a couple of things for us: first, He started before distractions (phone calls, emails, texts, news alerts, etc.) could deter Him from time together with His Dad. Second, Jesus went by Himself to a place away from people He knew so that He could experience the Father. I have found that libraries, quiet coffee shops, parks, and even other peoples’ empty offices are great locations for a DAWG.



I let family, friends, and co-workers know ahead of time that I’ll be out of pocket. These practices allow me to focus solely on the Father. Finally, He prayed. He talked and listened to God. Let me encourage you: it’s hard to hear God if you’re distracted by other incoming messages. I’d like to challenge you to fast from looking at your phone, computer, or social media for the day. It may be hard initially, but as you begin to do this regularly, you will find that being connected to God will always be more life-giving and satisfying than the conditional connections to the world.



Simply being alone reading your Bible and praying is enough and does not need to have a specific structure. Be open and flexible to how God will lead. He will if you let Him.

TOOLS

1. Get comfy! Before I start, I make sure to dress casually and comfortably. I like to wear shoes to hike or walk, and to be prepared for a bike ride or a nap. Yep... I sometimes even rest in the arms of Jesus for a bit! Remember, God is longing for us to draw near to Him; discomfort can distract you from Him.

2. 3x5 cards. Inevitably, you will be distracted by a to-do item or other concerns. I have found it helpful to write each item down on a 3x5 index card as I think of it and then leave it for later.

3. ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication. I'm assuming you're familiar with this format of prayer. Below is an outline of how I like to use this tool to structure my DAWG. Remember, these are just suggestions for those of you who prefer to have clear direction. Spend your DAWG however God leads you!

A. I like to begin my day in Adoration, praising God for who He is, not what He's done. *31 Ways to Praise* by Bob Hosteler (NavPress) is a great resource for this and can help add creativity to your praise.

B. I then move to Confession. I like to start by kneeling or walking in prayer to clear my head. I pray *Psalms 139:23-24*: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting." In confession, I know I can be fully honest with God because I'm already fully forgiven. *1 John 1:9* says, "If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." If God brings something specific to mind I need to follow up

with later, I write it down. For example, if God prompts me to go to someone and ask forgiveness, I write it down so I can be intentional about making it happen and not forgetting.

C. After confession, I personally like to pause in the ACTS and open my Bible so that my later Thanksgiving and particularly my Supplication are guided by my time in Scripture. I typically read a large chunk of the Bible in one sitting, ideally 15-20 chapters or one book. (If I get restless, I get up, walk around, or even read as I walk.) It's important to occasionally read large sections of Scripture, and it's hard to find time outside of a DAWG to do so. Remember, Jesus didn't preach in chapters; although the Bible is broken down into sections like Old Testament and New Testament, chapters and verses, it is the story of God and His great, unending love – a story WE are a part of! It's much easier to see the big picture when reading in big chunks.

As I re-read, I make sure to write down observations and things that stand out to me. I want to be quick to ask God what He might like for me to see, discover, or journal about in this particular book or passage. Sometimes I devote my time to reading for something specific. At various times, I've looked for leadership principles, questions asked, characters' responses, discipleship principles, or ways people have stepped out by faith. Finally, I meditate on the Scripture I read and observations I wrote down. What is God saying to me here? What do I want to thank God for here? To do this, I often go through SPECK. Is there a...

- **SIN TO CONFESS OR AVOID**
- **PROMISE TO CLAIM**
- **EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW (OR NOT FOLLOW)**
- **COMMAND TO OBEY**
- **KNOWLEDGE ABOUT GOD TO SHARE, EMBRACE, OR CORRECT**

D. By this time, it is close to lunch and I'm hungry! Whether I fast or grab a bite to eat, the key for me is to keep moving. Often, I do something physical to get my blood flowing. If I walk or ride my bike, I grab hold of a verse I've read in order to memorize or meditate on it. I have found that God often continues to speak to me in this way. Or I might listen to some good-ol' praise music as I enjoy the outdoors He's created for us! This is when I typically jump back into ACTS and begin to offer Thanksgiving to God for what I see around me.

E. After this, I'll continue to read my Bible, read parts of a Christian book I've brought along, or listen to a podcast/message on a topic I'm interested in.

F. Once I get to late afternoon, I begin to summarize my day in my journal. Then I'll begin to move towards prayer - things I've noticed or have become aware of during this day.

G. At this time, I'll also move into Supplication. I pray over each family member using a list I've compiled, along with the card *Biblical Virtues to Pray for Your Kids* by Bob Hosteler (NavPress), which helps me stay on track. Afterwards, I like praying for coworkers and their families and needs. Then, praying for church friends and our pastors helps me begin to think about our city, our state, our country, and the nations. I find I do my best praying when I have lists and cards on topics already at my fingertips. For some of you, the act of creating the list during your first DAWG will be meaningful. For those of you who find list-making tedious or frustrating, I'd encourage you to think through your list ahead of time or take advantage of a variety of prayer cards NavPress has put out, like the two I've mentioned above. These are available in the Glen Eyrie Bookstore CASTLE.BOOKSTORE@NAVIGATORS.ORG or [ONLINE AT NAVPRESS.ORG](http://ONLINEATNAVPRESS.ORG). Visit THEAPPRENTICEAPPROACH.COM for in-depth resources on SPECK, ACTS, and more!

APPLICATION

One of the most important parts of your day will be this time at the end: reflecting over what God has shown you and how you can continue to carry that with you back into "real life." Think about:

- 1.** What has God shown you today? Was it a meaningful passage/verse from the Bible? A point made by a speaker in a podcast? A phrase in the book you brought along?
- 2.** What do you want to do with that? Can you summarize it in order to share it with someone? Memorize it? Apply it? (*Think SPECK.*)
- 3.** Who can you call to process with and ask to hold you accountable to what God has revealed to you?

DAWG

PREPARATION IDEAS

WHAT WILL MY DAY LOOK LIKE?

- Eat/Fast? What will I fast from (do without)?
- Reflect while walking and praying?
- Read?
- Walk/run/ride/listen to music?
- Nap?

WHAT BOOK OF THE BIBLE WILL I READ?

- Is there a message or podcast by a special speaker that God is challenging me to listen to?
- Is there a book I'd like to read? Consider:
 - *The Pursuit of God* by A.W. Tozer
 - *The Blessings of Humility* by Jerry Bridges
 - *Meditation* by Jim Downing
 - *A Gospel Primer for Christians* by Milton Vincent

HOW AM I DOING (THINK THROUGH MY LAST DAWG)?

- Physically (sleep, exercise, recreation)
- Mentally (books, study, writing)
- Socially (friends, family, hospitality, social media, witnessing)
- Spiritually (quiet time, fellowship, Bible Study, Church)

APPLICATION?

- Is there a meaningful verse that I want to memorize?
-

- Do I want to dig more deeply through Bible study over an issue?

*The enclosed tear-out worksheet can help you with these questions. For another copy you can go to

WWW.GLENEYRIE.ORG/DAWGWORKSHEETS.

DAWG

WORKSHEET

1 WHAT WILL MY DAY LOOK LIKE?

2 WHAT WILL I READ?

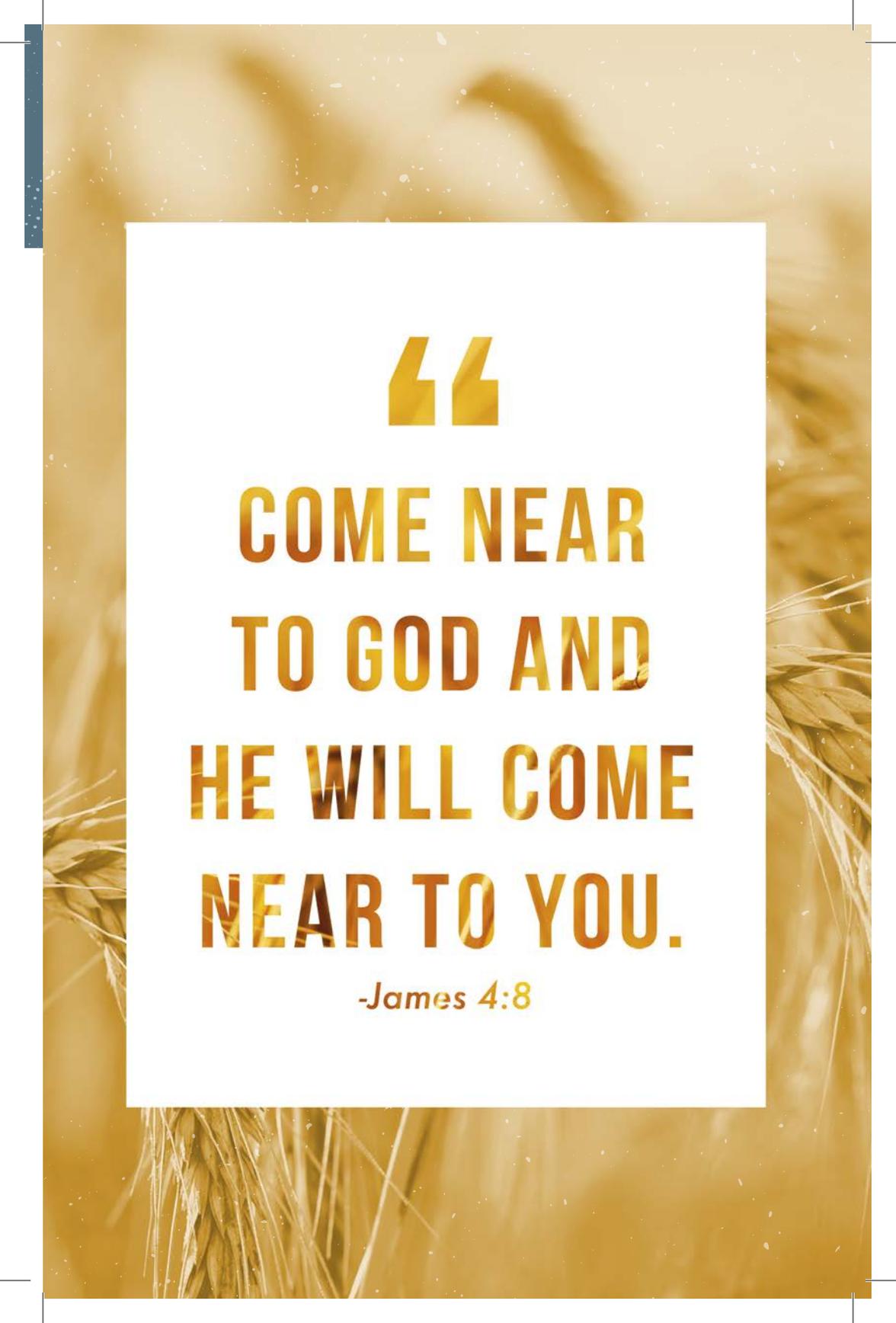
3 WHAT CAN I SUMMARIZE AND JOURNAL ABOUT TODAY?

4 WHAT CAN I TAKE AWAY FROM TODAY AND APPLY?

5 WHO DO I WANT TO CALL/PROCESS WITH TO HOLD ME ACCOUNTABLE? FOR WHAT?

BRING

- Bible, notebook/journal, music, books, pen
- Things I want to pray over:
- Things I want to remember:



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**COME NEAR
TO GOD AND
HE WILL COME
NEAR TO YOU.**

-James 4:8

DAWG

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