

A 5-Session Journey to Discovering His Power and Your Purpose

# AWAKENING TO GOD WORKBOOK

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A 6-Session Journey to Discovering  
His Power and Your Purpose

**GERARD LONG**  
*with Bruce Farley*



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*Awakening to God Workbook: A 6-Session Journey to Discovering His Power and Your Purpose*

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# Preface

THIS WORKBOOK IS INTENDED to enhance your reading of my book *Awakening to God* and to be used as a discussion guide in a small-group setting.

The main priorities for Christ followers are to love God and love other people (Matthew 22:37-39), and to obey Jesus' clear command to go and make disciples (Matthew 28:18-20). The world needs Christ followers who are authentically engaged in loving and reaching people with the good news of Jesus Christ. But in order for us to be equipped to see other people come to faith and maturity in Christ, we must first see these truths go deep in our own hearts and transform us by God's grace.

In addition to your personal study and reflection, this workbook is designed for use in small groups—Christ-centered communities—where wrestling with truth through group discussion and prayer can transform all of us together. Each session is flexible and can be fitted into your church's normal small-group framework, or the workbook can be used as a guide for a new small-group initiative.

As you read *Awakening to God* and use this workbook, please make your personal study, reflection, and growth a priority. That way, you will go to each group session ready to *give* what the Lord has given you and prepared to *receive* what he has for you to receive.

When my work on this study guide was interrupted by an unimaginable family tragedy (shared in the epilogue of *Awakening to God*), my colleague Bruce Farley asked to step in and finish the writing. We felt the message was too important and too timely to run the risk of it not having the greatest possible impact. I'm grateful to Bruce for his efforts and for how he improved the workbook through his wisdom, experience, and insight.

Before you begin this study, take a few moments to read Luke 10:1-6 and ask God to open your eyes to people around you who "promote peace." We'll explore this idea in greater depth in session 5, but I wanted to plant a seed, right at the outset, as you prepare to be *awakened to God* and become a worker sent out into the "harvest field."

## **Foreword**

AS PASTOR BILL HYBELS has memorably said, the local church is the hope of the world. *Awakening to God* was written to help the local church bring transformation to our society. The early church “turned the world upside down”<sup>1</sup> when they were equipped by the Holy Spirit and obeyed the teaching of Jesus Christ to follow him and “fish for people.”<sup>2</sup> *Awakening to God* is based on the same principles of equipping and teaching.

God has called you, as a follower of Jesus Christ, to know him and participate with him in his rescue plan for the men and women of the world—including your family, neighbors, friends, and coworkers. God’s plan for you has been in place since before the creation of the universe, and he has uniquely equipped you with gifts, abilities, and experiences that enable you to carry out the plan. When you find the “sweet spot” of God’s calling and purpose for your life, you will find contentment, fulfillment, and great joy there as well.

As you study *Awakening to God* on your own and then participate in the small-group discussions, listen carefully to what God says to you. Recognize what he has placed in your

hands, and be courageous in making commitments to use your gifts and abilities to draw others to Christ.

This workbook is designed to help you in three particular ways:

1. To help you grow in your personal relationship with Jesus Christ (because everything flows from your relationship with him). In particular, we want to help you grow in your knowledge of Scripture and your understanding and awareness of the Holy Spirit in your life.
2. To help you realize and understand how special you are to God. He has a unique plan to “send you out to fish for people.”<sup>3</sup> And he has promised to equip you with everything you need to complete his plan for you. God wants you to participate with him in his purposes; to live only to please him; and to complete his will for your life.
3. To help you know and understand that you are part of God’s amazing work and purpose on earth. We are all designed to fulfill God’s plan as part of the body of Christ, the church. Our prayer is that you would be supported and encouraged by other Christ followers and have at least one other Christ follower with whom you can walk closely as you “fish for people” and “turn the world upside down.”

## How to Use This Study

JESUS SAID, “IF YOU HOLD to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”<sup>4</sup> What you are about to experience in your small group is an opportunity to have a new *awakening* in your walk with Jesus. I pray it will guide you into greater truth and freedom, and will also lead you to a change in lifestyle, one that will align your life with the life of Christ. I pray that the rest of your time on earth will be dedicated to reaching and connecting with people who are spiritually sinking—that is, people who are without Christ and without hope. God wants to use you to be his hands and feet in his great rescue plan for the world.

Each week of the study is divided into five sections: Engage, Prepare, Discuss, Apply, and Further Reading. *Engage* is designed to connect you to the book *Awakening to God: Discovering His Power and Your Purpose* and to give you some foundational principles that apply to the chapter

reading for each week. *Prepare* is your opportunity to answer the questions on your own before the group discussion. This time of personal preparation is vital to your own growth and to the success of your small group. *Discuss* is the main group time, when you and other group members can share with one another the answers you've written during your preparation time. *Apply* will help you put into practical action the principles you've learned.<sup>5</sup> Each session ends with *Further Reading*—a list of verses to take you deeper into God's Word.

## ENGAGE

Before each group meeting, engage with the week's topic by reading the relevant chapters in *Awakening to God*. Ask God to speak to you as you read, and listen to what he says to you. Remember, whatever God asks you to do, he will provide you with the grace to carry it through. He is looking for your *availability* to participate with him in reaching people who are spiritually sinking.

As further preparation for each small-group session, review the list of principles that apply to each week's study. Also, to fully immerse yourself in the topic, read and meditate on the Further Reading for each session.

## PREPARE

*Awakening to God* is thoroughly grounded in Scripture, and what you will discuss in your small group is what Jesus taught his disciples. We should always allow God's Word to speak to us, and this means having a heart of humility. We don't

have all the answers; we're dependent on the Holy Spirit to guide us "into all the truth."<sup>6</sup> Meditate on the key Scriptures for each small-group session—and, if you can, memorize all or part of them.

## DISCUSS

Jesus taught his disciples in a group setting, and his teaching method was question based (for example, "Who do you say I am?"<sup>7</sup>). If you think about it, we actually learn more deeply when we have to wrestle with questions rather than try to absorb a list of facts. Think deeply about the questions and your personal and group answers, and make them your own. For this process to really be effective, you must be totally honest and fully engaged. Remember, your contribution may help others in the group to understand what God is saying to them.

Many of the questions in this workbook are drawn from specific passages in *Awakening to God*. We encourage you, if time allows during your small-group meetings, to read these passages aloud as a group before answering the questions. Experience has shown that reading aloud together enhances discussion and encourages greater participation.

This should be a *group* experience. No one person should dominate; instead, everyone should feel accepted, valued, and free—*encouraged*—to contribute. In this way, God will speak powerfully through the group dynamic.

We are created for God's pleasure. The best way we can please and glorify him is by completing the work he has

prepared for us to do.<sup>8</sup> Spend some time in each small-group session worshiping God from your heart—in song, in spoken communication, in silence, in prayer, and in loving and blessing one another.

## APPLY

Because of our human weakness and our busy lives, we often forget to put the Word into action, even after God has spoken to us. As a result, we see little or no change in our lives. As part of session 1, identify (and agree with) one or two others in the group and commit yourselves to pray and hold one another accountable to carry out the application items from each small-group session. It is only when you “continue to follow [Jesus]” and “let your roots grow down into him, and let your [life] be built on him” that “your faith will grow strong in the truth”<sup>9</sup> and you will be equipped to share the good news of Jesus Christ with the people around you who are sinking.

## WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Before your first meeting, be sure that each group member has a copy of the following three books:

- *Awakening to God: Discovering His Power and Your Purpose* by Gerard Long
- *Awakening to God Workbook*
- a Bible

## Session 1

# AWAKENING TO GOD'S LOVE AND PURPOSE

### ENGAGE

Read chapter 1 in *Awakening to God: Discovering His Power and Your Purpose*.

If you have surrendered all of your life to Christ (at least as far as you know), you don't need to fret about whether you're in the sweet spot of his will for you. Instead, keep your focus on Jesus and on loving him more (Psalm 37:4). He will guide you with his love and give you peace through the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 30:21). Scripture teaches that suffering for the Kingdom of God—which is different from suffering for our own bad decisions—is a high calling (Genesis 50:20; Philippians 1:29, 3:8). Ultimately, God's perfect plan is that we will come to know Christ more and more.

### Principles for obeying God's will for your life

- Love God and people (Matthew 22:37-40)

- Go and make disciples for Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20)
- Guard your heart (Proverbs 4:23)
- Make time with God your first priority (Matthew 6:33)
- Walk by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7)
- Do everything for God's glory (Isaiah 43:21, 61:1-3)
- Do everything with all your heart, as working for the Lord (Ecclesiastes 9:10; Colossians 3:23-24)
- Be a good steward of all that God has given you (Luke 12:48, 19:11-27)

## PREPARE

Why have you decided to read the book *Awakening to God*? What do you hope to gain from your time of studying the book on your own and discussing it with others in a small group? Write your initial thoughts here:

## Awakening to God's Purpose

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)*

[Before discussing the following question during your small-group time, have someone read aloud the paragraph on page 1 in *Awakening to God* that begins "I still remember . . ." and ends ". . . life made out of perfect love."]

1. At the beginning of chapter 1 in *Awakening to God*, Gerard Long tells the story of Valentine's Day 1980, the day he first truly awakened to God. Have you had a similar awakening in your own life? What do you remember about the day when you first believed in Jesus and surrendered your life to his lordship? Write down your thoughts and feelings about that time in your life:

2. How have you dealt with hard times in your life? How did God use that time to awaken you to his love and purpose for you?

### **Awakening to God's Lordship**

*You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.* (Jeremiah 29:13)

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.* (Romans 12:1-2)

[Before discussing the following question during your small-group time, have someone read aloud the paragraph on page 7 in *Awakening to God* that begins “I encourage you to consider . . .” and ends “. . . into a full and satisfying life.”]

3. In your day-to-day life, what does it look like for you to be someone who seeks the Lord with all your heart and offers your body as a “living sacrifice” to

God? As you answer these questions and share your thoughts with the group, be real and practical—not theoretical or idealistic.

### Awakening to God's Love

*I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:17-19)*

[Before discussing the following question during your small-group time, have group members read aloud the passage on pages 9–10 in *Awakening to God* that begins “Four things immediately . . .” and ends “. . . I was now enjoying.”]

4. Gerard says that four things immediately changed in his life when he fully surrendered himself to Christ: he was head over heels in love with Jesus; he had a newfound love for God’s Word; he desired to live a holy life (first seen when he stopped swearing); and he developed a deep love and concern for other

people. Which of these changes resonates the most with you at this point in your walk with God? Why? Be ready to share your answer with the group.

5. How does an awareness of God's love for you increase your heart of love for others and your desire to tell them about Jesus?

## DISCUSS

As you begin your first group time together, take a moment to pray for God's purposes to be accomplished as you study and grow together. Then go through the questions together,

reading aloud where indicated, and share your answers with the group.

### APPLY

Based on your reading of chapter 1 in *Awakening to God* and this week's group discussion, write down for yourself—and feel free to share with the group—practical areas in which you can grow.

As you think about God's love for you—and his desire to express Christ's love *through* you—take a moment to write down the names of at least five people you know who don't know Christ. Commit yourself to start (or continue) praying for these people and engaging with them in a more intentional way. Write their names here:


Connect with one or two other people in the group and team up to pray together weekly for the areas of growth you've identified and the people God has prompted you to pray for and engage with.

### FURTHER READING

Job 23:10; Psalm 23; Psalm 127:1; Zechariah 4:6; Matthew 21:1-3; John 3:8; John 3:27; John 4:34; John 5:30; John 6:38; John 8:29; Acts 9:11-12, 15-16; Acts 13:2; Philippians 2:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:11; Hebrews 1:3