



Annie Pajcic



THOUARTEXALTED, INC.

Creating Art through God's Word
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RIDING TANDEM • Leaning into the Leading of God

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Let me begin by saying THANK YOU for purchasing Riding Tandem. Whether you are doing this Bible study alone or with a group of friends, I hope this guide will be helpful to you.

Riding Tandem is a six-week Bible study divided into the T-A-N-D-E-M acronym: T-ime for Takeoff, A-lignment, N-ecessary Stops, D-on't Stop Pedaling, E-njoy the Ride, and M-ark the Moments. The lessons are divided into five segments of homework that should take no longer than 30 minutes a day. If you are a small group leader, have a highlighter nearby to highlight the questions that mean the most to you during your quiet times. There are also "tandem icons" that point to the more personal questions. Your highlights and the tandem icons will be a quick reference for discussion when leading your small group.

Videos: I encourage you to view the teaching video following each week's lesson. Videos are available at www.thouartexalted.com/riding-tandem.

I believe the purpose of a small group is to have fellowship with one another and grow in the knowledge of God's Word. I love small groups because they build friendships that allow the Word to penetrate into the realness of our lives. After leading small groups for years, I have some TIPS to share with you:

1. Keep track of TIME.

Decide ahead of time how long your group sessions will be. If you choose to watch the video, add 35 minutes. For small group discussion time, take the time allotted and divide by the days of homework (in this case, five). For example: If you have 50 minutes to discuss homework, then allow 10 minutes of discussion per day. Use your highlighted and tandem questions as your main focus. If you have time, ask your group if one of the questions stood out among the others and how God used that question to make a difference in their life. Remember to always look at your watch and keep the conversation going. If you have time at the end, you can always go back to look at a question.

2. Keep conversation on TOPIC.

Women can be easily distracted and quickly get off course. Your job is to keep everyone on track. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you gentleness as you steer the conversation back on topic.

3. Keep TALKY people to a minimum.

Not everyone wants to share in a small group. Allow a chance for everyone to participate and be careful that no one person dominates the conversation. If you have this situation, you might want to gently speak to her in private and encourage her to allow others to share their answers. Be sensitive to the needs of others and ask God for wisdom.

4. Allow TIME to prepare.

As a leader, be prepared to facilitate your small group. This means ... do your homework! You can't lead if you haven't taken time to sit with the Lord and study Riding Tandem.

5. TAKE time to PRAY with and for your small group.

This is one of the most important aspects of your group. I would encourage you to take prayer requests at the end of each discussion time and emphasize the confidentiality of the group. Prayers and discussions are personal and should not be taken outside your small group.

This is not a complete list of "how-to" lead a small group by any means, but hopefully it hit on a few good points! Remember to be real. Be yourself. Be inviting. Allow the Holy Spirit to lead you as you have the privilege to lead your small group. And, if you ever have any questions, please e-mail me at apajcic@thouartexalted.com.

We are praying for you!

INTRODUCTION TO *Riding Tandem*:

Have you ever ridden a tandem bicycle?

Growing up, our family had a tan and white striped tandem. Oh, the beauty of a bicycle built for two! Yet because our family was built for six, seats were limited. At the age of seven, I could barely reach the pedals AND hold on to the handlebars at the same time. I found out early on that it was easier to let one of my sisters take the front seat and do **all** the work. I was along for the ride and glad for it.

Honestly, my family had good reason not to trust my biking abilities. While I would not describe Jacksonville as a “hilly” town, there is one place where you can feel the slight downhill tilt of the road. The combination of this hill, a parked car, my distraction, and the front end of my banana seat bicycle was not good. BOOM. You can only imagine.

Fortunately, **Riding Tandem** is not about how many accidents we have had. It is not about climbing the ranks of the seating chart, reaching for the pedals, or navigating parked cars. **Riding Tandem** is about an authentic, everyday, one-on-one relationship with God. It's about learning our position on the back of the bike and trusting God with the front steering. Our personal relationship with God is built for two. He is the Captain, so we must learn to lean into His leading, pedal forward, and trust Him with the directions. **Riding Tandem** will teach us that while our final destination is heaven, our destiny on earth has purpose. We are not just along for the ride. We are **a part** of the ride. God wants us to live an abundant life completely surrendered to His leading. **Riding Tandem** with Jesus is letting go of the handlebars and experiencing His power as we pedal. Everyday.

Riding Tandem is divided into six chapters using the acronym **T-A-N-D-E-M**.

Week One: **T**-ime for Takeoff

Week Two: **A**-lignment

Week Three: **N**-ecessary Stops

Week Four: **D**-on't Stop Pedaling

Week Five: **E**-njoy the Ride

Week Six: **M**-ark the Moments

Each day we have a choice to make. Are we going to steer our own stories, or are we going to allow God to guide? My prayer for us as we journey through **Riding Tandem** is that we will hop on the back and allow God to take the wheel. He is our teacher and life is our classroom. If we have teachable hearts, God will use our stories in tandem with His Word to teach us His principles. Yes, it can be hard. Sometimes it feels easier to be in control, work hard, and get the job done. But God has a bigger plan. His ways are higher than ours and always better. Where is God taking you today? Are you equipped for the ride? He promises never to leave your side as the Captain of your life. Do you trust His leading? Are you willing to let go of the handlebars? Allow me to pray this prayer as we begin the journey of **Riding Tandem**.

*Dear Lord, today I choose to hop on the back seat of the tandem. I choose to let You steer the story of my life and teach me the lessons ahead. Life is Your classroom, and I am Your student. I will take the time to sit, listen, study hard, and do my work. I will pedal hard and learn to trust in Your teaching. While I can't see the road ahead, You can. I know that You go before me. I know there will be times when I am afraid and want to clutch on to my handlebars and take control. Please remind me that You are right there with me. You will never leave me. At times, I might want You to speed things up, and at other times, slow life down. Remind me that Your timing and pace are perfect. We are in this ride **together**. With You as my Captain, I can press on, be patient, and persevere with joy. Climb on sweet Lord! Balance the bike for me so I can take the position as Your co-captain. Lead me in the way everlasting so that I may soar in Your presence. It's time to ride. Amen.*

It's a beautiful day for a bike ride!
Lots of love and grace,

Annie

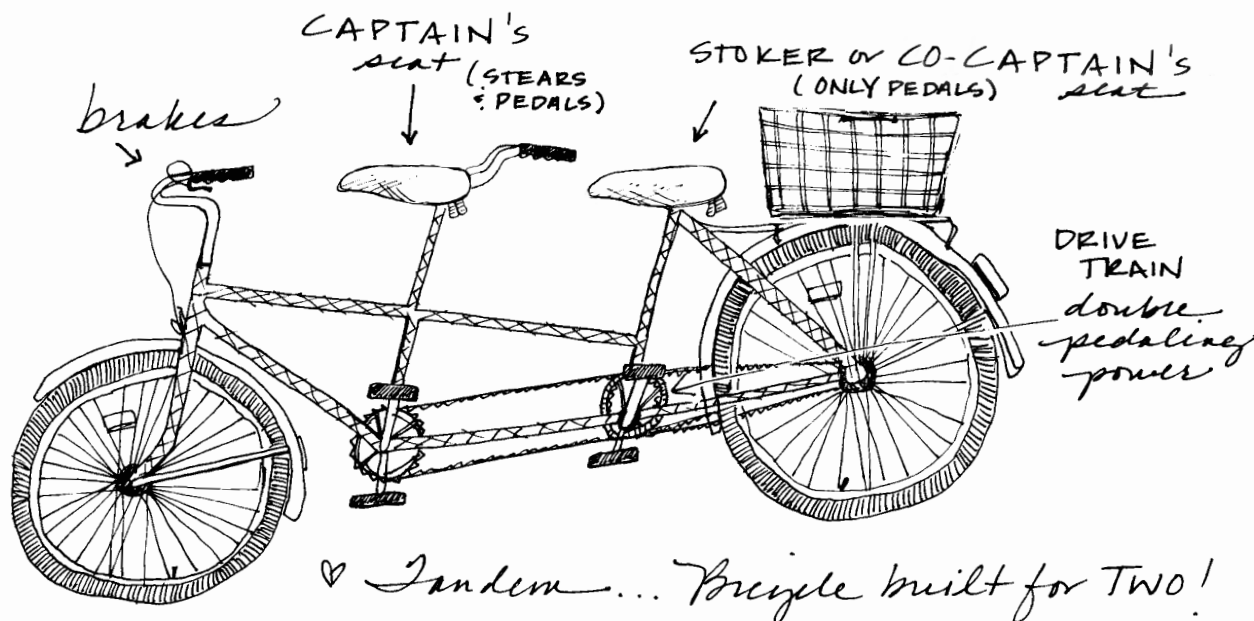
Lesson One/ TIME FOR TAKEOFF

Imagine a tandem bicycle has just arrived at your back door. Immediately you notice the note tied to the front handlebar.

Welcome! Let Me introduce Myself. My name is Captain, and I am overjoyed that you chose Me to ride through life with you. We are going to take amazing adventures together. As your Captain, I know the direction we will take. There's no need to be distracted by all the latest gadgets and gizmos because I have all the equipment you need. I have plenty of water, and rest stops are planned well in advance. If you ever feel tired, insecure, or winded, just stop pedaling and coast. I have you in the palm of My hand. If you ever get scared, worried, or doubt My leading, just lean in and trust that I am steering you in the right direction. Make sure to mark the special moments we will have together and always remember to enjoy the ride. Life can get tricky sometimes, but if you trust Me, I will give you eyes to see from My perspective. Do not worry. As your Captain, I am in full control. Before you climb aboard, please read My instructions and know your seating assignment. It is very important to know our takeoff procedures before we ride together on this tandem bicycle.

*With everlasting love,
Your Captain*

It's **T-ime for Takeoff!** The tandem bicycle will be our visual focus for **Riding Tandem**. Take a look at this illustration and soak in the imagery.



For the next six weeks, our transportation of choice is the tandem bicycle. Before we take off though, we need to be familiar with **takeoff procedures** and following instructions. Both are very important for takeoff. **Any takeoff.**

I boarded the plane and sat in my assigned seat that just happened to be located in the emergency aisle. The flight attendant, who seemed a little skittish, anxiously asked me if I felt responsible enough to handle **an emergency situation**, if one was to occur. "Absolutely," I said with confidence as I scanned the little white box above my head that said, "Pull-Down."

If she hadn't been so freaky about my ability to be responsible, I probably would not have had so many waves of doubt rush into my brain. But rush they did. And fast.

*What if I were asked to execute an emergency procedure?
What if I had to open that little white box above my head?
Could I handle an emergency situation? I mean, I was only 21-years-old.*

Even though my whole body was saying, "NO! Don't touch the white box," my hand began to move upward. My fingers barely touched the little white box when the outer cover popped open. I was horrified. Instantly, I could feel the glaring eyes of the flight attendant as she walked in my direction. This was it. I was going to be kicked off the island.

"What have you done? You have tampered with the emergency box! Now we will be late for departure because of—**YOU**. Call the technician! We have an emergency. We cannot takeoff until we reattach the little white box."

I was ready for handcuffs.

None were needed. My punishment was 150 irritated, frustrated, and irate passengers staring at me. Curiosity not only killed the cat, it killed my desire to EVER tamper with takeoff procedures again. **Ever.**

Following instructions, God's instructions, is our T-ime (preparation) for Takeoff. Tampering with His instructions not only delays our departure, but also irritates those around us. I learned this the hard way!

Seating positions are also important for takeoff. As you can see from the illustration, it is very clear this bicycle is built for **two**. The front rider is called the captain. The captain's job is to steer the bike **and** pedal. The back rider is called the stoker or co-captain whose **only job** is to pedal. Slowly re-read those sentences and carefully look at the words **AND** and **ONLY**. I hope you are beginning to see a creative connection with our seating position on the tandem bike. God is our Captain, and He is on the front seat to steer and pedal. Yes, ladies, this means we are on the back seat and can **only** pedal. As hard as this might seem (not to be in control and steer this tandem journey), God is best suited for the position of Captain.

The word for captain can also be translated: **master**. The Greek word for master is "**kyrios**," meaning Lord, and it is used more than 740 times in the New Testament, usually referring to Jesus. I love that **kyrios** is defined as **one who has the power**. It is a title of honor, respect, and reverence. It also refers to the one to whom a person belongs.¹ **Kyrios** was often defined as "the relationship between Jesus and those who believed in him as Christ: Jesus was their Lord and Master who was to be served with all their hearts."² When we place our trust in Jesus, He becomes our Savior as well as our Captain—the **ONE WHO HAS THE POWER**. (And, the driver's seat!)

Now that we understand more about the word used for captain, it's time to ask a very important question:
Why is Jesus a good Captain? Let's begin!

Read the following verses and write down the qualifications of Jesus as our Captain in each passage.


• **Philippians 2:9-11**

• **Romans 10:9-13**

• John 14:6

• John 13:12-17

• Colossians 1:15-20

Jesus is MORE than qualified to hire as your Captain! Be creative and fill out this job application for Jesus based on the verses you just read. Have fun sharing these in your small group. **Please note: When you see a tandem icon, this is a great question to ponder as a small group.* 

riding TANDEM

job application

Position applying for: _____
 Name: JESUS Phone Number: _____ E-Mail: _____
 Address: _____ References: _____

Recent Employment: _____ How long have you been employed in this position? _____

Describe your qualifications for this position including education, skills, abilities, and work experience.

Describe why you are applying for this position.

Have you ever been convicted of a crime? Have you ever been arrested? Explain.

Can we contact you at work? Yes: _____ No: _____ When are you available? _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

We can see with clarity that Jesus, **the kyrios—the One who has the power**, is best suited for the job as our front seat driver. Our Captain is the Lord Jesus. Every knee will bow one day to recognize this powerful truth. Confession in His name alone has the power to save us. He is the way, the truth, and the life. He is our Teacher. He is Lord. His name alone

is a title of honor, respect, and reverence. He is also a humble servant. He is the image of the invisible God, and **all** of God's fullness dwells in Him. He is the Creator and Sustainer. He is the beginning of all things, holds everything together, and made peace for all things through His blood shed on the cross (Colossians 1:15-20).

This lesson is KEY to prepare for takeoff. In fact, I'm lifting off my seat right now just having read our Captain's job application! Jesus is our Captain, and His job on this tandem ride is to steer, pedal, and **lead**. If you are in an emergency situation, He **wants** you to pull down the little white box. He's got the power to steer you in the right direction and is ready to give you grace—not to stare you down, humiliate you, and expose your mess-ups.

Tomorrow, we will discuss our role in the seating position as the stoker and co-captain. I can hardly wait. Great job today!

Lesson Two/ GET STOKED!

Yesterday, we learned that Jesus is well-qualified to be our Captain in this tandem ride called life.

Today, we are going to discuss our positioning on this bicycle built for two. It is important to note again that the back rider, called the co-captain or stoker, **only** pedals. We are not called to steer. I know this is tough news for some of us or maybe all of us. It's not easy hopping on the back. Why? We want to be in charge. We want the control seat where we can make the calls and call the shots. But in God's economy, this is **not** our position. Our position is on the back.

Look up the following verses and answer the questions. What repeating word prepares us to be co-captains and stokers with Jesus as our Captain? What is God's response when we take this position?



Repeating Word/ God's Response

• 1 Peter 5:5-6

_____/_____
_____/_____
_____/_____

• James 4:10

_____/_____
_____/_____
_____/_____

• Psalm 25:9

_____/_____
_____/_____
_____/_____

• Matthew 23:12

_____/_____
_____/_____
_____/_____

LEAD ME

Humility is the opposite of pride. The position of pride wants the power and prestige of the Captain's seat. But God's Word makes it clear that "pride goes before destruction" (Proverbs 16:18). When we are humble enough to move to the rear, God guides and teaches us what is right. When we clothe ourselves in humility, God responds with grace. When we humble ourselves, God **lifts us up**. Humility will always instruct us how to lean on the Captain's leading. No more backseat driving, girls. Keep pedaling and **leave the steering to God**.

Did you notice on the illustration that the co-captain is also called a **stoker**? A stoker is a term meaning: a laborer employed to tend and fuel a furnace, especially a furnace that generates steam, as on a steamship or a person who pedals on the back of a tandem bicycle.³

To stoke means: to stir or add to the fire.

Read 2 Timothy 1:6-7 and get stoked! (Sorry, I couldn't resist. Stoked is slang for "get pumped up!")

What is Paul telling us to do?

Paul is reminding young Timothy—and us—to stir up or **fan into flames** the gifts God has given. This stirring can be used in terms of being strengthened physically or inflaming one's mind as a fire is kindled anew or lighted up.⁴

This is incredible! Over the next six weeks, we will learn that our position on this tandem bike is on the **back**. **We are the stokers**. We are in charge of tending the furnace that generates power for us to pedal. This power comes not from pride or our own personal efforts to pedal, but from our humility as we learn to trust in the Source, the Lord, our Kyrios. Tending the fire is spending time with God, building a one-on-one relationship, spreading His Word, and serving Him with our gifts. This is preparation for **T-ime for Takeoff** at its core. *The Message* translation of 2 Timothy 1:7 reminds us to keep the special gifts of ministry that God has given us **ablaze**!

" . . . —keep that ablaze! God doesn't want us to be shy with his gifts, but bold and loving and sensible."

I am not sure if the band Unspoken used Eugene Peterson's version of 2 Timothy 1:6-7, but I do know it was not a coincidence that I heard their song: Let Your Light Shine on the radio. Read the lyrics and see if you get goose bumps like I did!

This world can be cold and bitter
Feels like we're in the dead of winter
Waiting on something better
But am I really gonna hide forever?

Over and over again
I hear Your voice in my head
Let Your light shine, let Your light shine for all to see


(Chorus)
**Start a fire in my soul
Fan the flame and make it grow
So there's no doubt or denying**

Let it burn so brightly
That everyone around can see
That it's You, that it's You that we need
Start a fire in me⁵

God wants to start a fire of faith in each one of us. Sometimes, we can feel like life is cold and bitter. Gripping for control, we tighten our hands on the handlebars until our knuckles turn white. Today, if you are struggling with an area of control, give it to Jesus. He's got the credentials to set you free.

Be humble and stoke the fire within you. Fan the flame. Let your light shine for all the world to see.

Your Captain is waiting.

Read John 8:12. In light of today's lesson, what do you think this verse teaches you as you learn to ride tandem with Him? Where do you need to let go of control? 

Lord, You are the Light of the world. You are the Light that gives my life purpose and power. I pray I would fan into flames the gifts You have given to me. With humility, I pray to surrender my pride and learn my position on the back seat. Teach me to give You the control seat as I lean into Your leading. I am a stoker! This special relationship shows my commitment to serve You, honor You, trust You, believe in You, and ride through life with You. This tandem journey was meant for two—You and Me. I am honored to be Your co-captain. I will take the next six weeks to learn from You as You lead me in the right direction. Show me how I can use my gifts to light the fire of passion within me and others. Teach me to ride tandem with You. Amen.

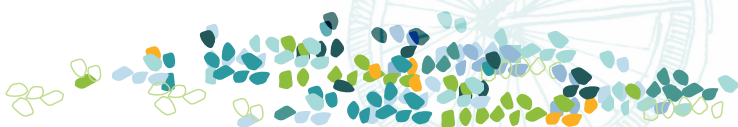
Lesson Three/ KNOWING IS BELIEVING

Look back at our bicycle illustration. How many people can ride on a tandem? That's right! The tandem is built for two. Not three or four.

Our relationship with Jesus is a **personal one**. While it is important to have fellowship, prayer partners, a good church home, and mentors, we must make time for Jesus one-on-one in order to **know** Him.

T-time for Takeoff is about developing this personal relationship. As women with busy lives, and I am sure you have one, we need to grow **deeper** in our relationship with the Lord. But how do we do this?

How do we worry less and praise more? 



How do we surrender our plans and let God steer?

How do we become less self-centered and more Christ-focused?

How can we connect with Christ on a day-to-day personal level?

As BUSYNESS tends to drive our lives, we need an authentic connection with our Captain. I believe our first step towards building a deeper relationship with Jesus is **knowing** who He is and **why** we believe in Him. We need to be 100% confident in His position as our Captain.

What is the result when we have confidence in the Lord?

• Jeremiah 17:7-8

• Hebrews 4:16

• 1 John 5:13-15

Confidence in our Captain deepens our faith so we do not fear when trouble comes, we stay faithful when we get doubtful, and we continue to believe even when life is hard. Confidence in Christ allows us to approach God with boldness knowing He hears our prayers and answers them according to His will. The apostle Paul was passionate about having this confidence. In his letter to the church at Colosse, Paul encourages us not to give into doubt, but **believe with certainty** that Jesus is the truth. Paul was a true-hearted stoker!

Today, be filled with confidence as you read Colossians 2:2-4. Fill in this personal prayer.

“ _____ (your name), I want you to be encouraged and knit together by strong ties of love. _____ (your name), I want you to have **complete confidence** that you understand God’s mysterious plan, which is Christ himself. In him lie hidden **all** the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I am telling you this so no one will deceive you, _____ (your name), with well-crafted arguments.”

Paul’s mission is stoking the fire of Jesus so we can be **confident** and **encouraged** in Him. Paul is pedaling with intention to keep the power source aflame. He wants nothing more than for us to understand that true wisdom and knowledge are revealed when we believe in the richest treasure of all. **Jesus**.

Let me ask you a pivotal question.

Who is Jesus to you? Be honest. Share a time when you trusted Him to be your Captain and steer your life. 

Read Matthew 16:13-17 and answer the following questions.

What is the first question Jesus asks His disciples? What is their answer?

What is the second question Jesus asks? What is Peter's answer?

Who revealed this mystery to Peter?

Peter confesses Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. Peter is confessing with **confidence** that Jesus is his Captain. He is proclaiming Jesus is his Kyrios, the One to whom he belongs. If you remember from day one's lesson, kyrios is about a relationship. As we prepare for our journey together in **Riding Tandem**, we must define this relationship if we want a deeper connection with our Captain. **Who do you say Jesus is?**

Is He just a good man? Is He just a good teacher? Or, is He the Christ, the son of the Living God? Do you really **know** Him?

When we declare Jesus is the Christ, we are confessing (among many things) that Jesus is our Captain. He has the power to steer our lives, and we **trust** without a doubt that He is leading us in the right direction. I love the following quote from Liz Curtis Higgs: "Believing in God is easy. Trusting in God is hard." Why? Because we do not like surrendering the control! Until we know Jesus personally, we will not trust Him. But how can we be certain that we can trust Him?

"Those who know your name trust in you, for you, O LORD, have never abandoned anyone who searches for you."
Psalm 9:10 (NLT)

Why can we trust Him according to Psalm 9:10?

Believing Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, is foundational to the Christian faith and an essential element in our journey of **Riding Tandem**. You are not going to TRUST someone to captain your life if you do not KNOW Him personally. The word used here for "know" is *yada*. It means: *to learn to know, to perceive, to know by experience, to recognize, to be revealed*.⁵ Knowing Jesus is your Captain is believing and **trusting** He will never abandon you. Knowing Jesus is experiencing a one-on-one relationship with Him. He loves you and desires a deeper connection. He wants to reveal Himself to you. Knowing is believing. **Believing is trusting.**

What I love about the Christian faith is that even though God already knows every hair on our head, He waits for **our invitation** to believe in Him. He waits for us to **invite Him** into our hearts. He will never force us to move to the back seat. It is our decision to make Him Captain and to follow Him.

Read Revelation 3:20. What does this tell you about a personal relationship with Jesus?

Jesus is standing and waiting. It is our **confession** in Jesus that opens the door to eternal life (Romans 10:9-13). Our belief that He is the Christ, the son of the Living God, is the beginning of an abundant bike ride. The Creator of the universe is waiting for us to **know** Him—so He can reveal Himself to us in a personal, experiential, one-on-one relationship.

Finish by reading Paul's prayer in **Colossians 2:6-7** from *The Message* and be encouraged!

"And now, _____ (your name), just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue **to follow him**. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your life be built on him. Then your faith, _____ (your name), will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness. I want you, _____ (your name) woven into a tapestry of love, in touch with everything there is to know of God. Then you, _____ (your name), will have a mind confident and at rest, **focused** on Christ, God's great mystery. All the richest treasures of wisdom and knowledge are embedded in that mystery and nowhere else. And you, _____ (your name), have been shown the mystery!"

What a great day! We must continue to fan the flames and follow Christ. Dig your roots deep. Build your life on Him. Be confident that He is leading you! You are woven in the tapestry of His love with a passion so deep you can rest in His peace that surpasses human understanding. He has your life on a perfect path, on a perfect timeline, going the **perfect speed**. Amen.

Lesson Four/ EARS TO HEAR, EYES TO SEE

During the past three days, we have learned who our Captain is and why He has the authority to take the front seat.

We have learned our position on the back seat and the truth that knowing Him personally opens the door to confident belief and trust. Today, we will look at why it's important to prepare our hearts **before** we ride with God through our day. **We need eyes to see and ears to hear in order to lean into His leading.** Recently, God showed me a life verse we should all tape to our refrigerators! Isaiah 50:4 opens with these words, "Sovereign Lord." The word, sovereign, is translated *Adonai*, where God is addressed submissively and with reverence. It is similar to our Greek word for Master or kyrios. It is like saying Lord, Lord with **double** emphasis. Double the speed. **Double the pedaling power.**

"The Sovereign Lord has taught me what to say, so that I can strengthen the weary. Every morning he makes me eager to hear what he is going to teach me."

Isaiah 50:4 (GW)

Slowly read Isaiah 50:4. Why should we spend time with God every morning?

According to Isaiah 50:4, when we acknowledge that our Captain is Lord, Lord, we are addressing our God with reverence and given words to say that strengthen the weary. I don't know about you, but I want to be first in line to receive wise words that give hope to my children and joy to my friends. I bet you might be in line, too, perhaps to

give encouragement to your husband or loved ones. Better yet, what an awesome day when we can remember God's promises to give **us** a boost when we find ourselves in circumstances we were not expecting.

I was in a coffee shop recently and overheard the conversation behind me of a sweet woman who was having a hard day. **A really hard day.** I knew this because the words coming out of her mouth and into her cell phone were less than complimentary. God convicted me to say something, but I must admit, I was not interested. *"Lord, she does not even know me, AND she will think I'm super weird, AND she will accuse me of eavesdropping. Can't I just pray for her without actually speaking to her?"* As I battled through this imaginary conversation, my latte was served. It was **T-ime for Takeoff**, and I had a choice to make. I could simply exit and pray for her by name (after all, I knew it because she had to tell the barista!), or I could tell her that I was praying for her. **I decided to tell her.** Her eyes filled with tears as I said her name and told her that I didn't know what she was going through but God did. I'm so glad I didn't let my fears get the best of me and bank on the old adage that says, "Actions speak louder than words." Sometimes we have to **use** our words, let go of our insecurities, and **TELL** people that God loves them.

Read Isaiah 50:4 again. In addition to strengthening the weary, God wakes us up with a special alarm clock eager to hear what He has to say. This daily morning by morning discipline of getting up and sitting with the Lord is important. We can't expect the blessing until we are willing to build the relationship. We need ears to hear and hearts ready to be taught. We don't want to miss Jesus in the morning. If we do, we might miss telling about Him in coffee shops.

We can't expect the blessing until we are willing to build the relationship.

Read the following verses. What is the result of a listening ear and a teachable heart? 

• **Romans 10:17**

• **Matthew 7:24**

• **1 Thessalonians 2:13**

Our faith comes from hearing the Word. We are considered wise when we obey God's teaching because our faith is built on a strong foundation. Hearing and acting on the Word performs its work in us who believe. Read Isaiah 55:11 in the margin. God's Word will never come back empty. Once it is sown into our soul, it has purpose. I love that!

"So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."

Isaiah 55:11

Read the following verses about Jesus waking up to spend time with His Captain. What were the results of His prayers?

• **Mark 1:35-39**

• Luke 4:42-44

I love this exercise. Jesus never slept in! He was disciplined in His T-IME for Takeoff. Notice what happened after His time of prayer. **He was eager and inspired to preach and spread the good news!** When we, too, take the time to spend our mornings with Jesus, our ears are opened to hear the Word. Our lips become a source for healing, and our hearts are open to go and preach the good news of the Kingdom of God. Amen!

God is going to teach us, inspire us, and lead us, but we have to be **still** enough to listen. We have to have teachable and eager hearts to learn. If we are going to have a one-on-one personal relationship with our Captain, the best preparation for the ride is to get to know Him. Remember, we can't expect the blessing unless we are willing to build the relationship. Wake up morning by morning, read the Word of God, and sit so you can soar into your day. Think of it like riding a bike with no hands! Ah, the freedom.

I drove by a sign last night that said, "What you look at is not necessarily what you see." Think about this for a minute. Time spent with our Master in the morning is **essential** to our takeoff preparation for the day. It's essential because our first glance at something might not be what God wants us to see. Sometimes to really see something, we have to spend T-I-M-E looking at it.

Read the following verses. Why does God want to open our eyes? What does He want us to see?

• Psalm 119:18

"Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in your instructions." Psalm 119:18

• Ephesians 1:17-19

• Acts 26:16-18 (Why were Paul's eyes opened and how does this affect us today?)

• Isaiah 42:6-8

Why does God want to open our eyes? Because **our bike ride matters!** T-ime for Takeoff is about building a strong foundation of faith, and it begins with spending time in God's Word. We, like Paul, have a mission. We are stokers, a light for others, and servants of Christ with a message to share. God wants us to have a spirit of wisdom and

revelation to know Him better so that the eyes of our hearts will be “flooded with light so we can understand the **confident hope** He has given to us” (Ephesians 1:17-19). He wants to turn our eyes from the darkness of pedaling backward which only entangles us in the chains of disappointment and regret. He wants us to pedal forward and fix our eyes on the light of His everlasting love and forgiveness. He wants us to lean into His leading and respond to His goodness. **Riding Tandem** with Jesus has the capacity to change our vision and the direction of our course. Our Captain wants to give us **hope** in a sometimes hopeless world. But the revelation of God’s Word can only happen when our eyes are open, our ears are listening, our hearts are ready to receive—and our rear ends are seated.

Psalms 119:18 is a verse we will see often in **Riding Tandem**. It emphasizes that God wants to open our eyes because He wants to show us the **wonderful truths** about Him. The cool part about this verse is that the word for wonderful is *pala* meaning: *marvelous, wonderful, be beyond's one power, be difficult to do.*⁶ This is amazing! When we take time to spend with God morning by morning, He gives us eyes to see things which only He can accomplish in our lives. We are seeing from a new perspective. His perspective. A godly perspective. Our Captain, the Sovereign Lord, has lots to teach us when we wake up morning by morning. Wipe out the sleepy seeds and **set the alarm**. No snoozing allowed!

*Lord, Thank You for this Bible study as I am learning to Ride Tandem with You. I have learned that You are the Captain of my life. You are in the front seat to steer **and** pedal. I am on the back seat where I can **only** pedal. This is so hard, Lord! I want to be in control. I want to steer my own plans. But with humility and trust, I am confident that You are leading me in the right direction. Give me eyes to see and wisdom to discern where I can stoke the fire to serve You the best. Lord, I desire a deeper connection to You, and in order to have this, I need a teachable spirit. I pray You would wake me each morning with an eager desire to listen and learn. Sometimes what I am looking at is not what You want for me to see. Give me eyes to see with a godly perspective. Sometimes life gets so upsetting that I cannot see the road ahead. Come alongside me and use Your Scripture to steer my heart. I am Yours, Lord. Use me today and teach me to lean into Your leading. Amen.*

Lesson Five/ OUR FINAL DESTINATION

Today, we are going to answer the question: Where is God leading us anyway? There is always a reason, right?

John-John and Curry were fighting about something. (As time goes on, isn’t it nice to forget those little arguments you thought were going to drive you crazy?) John-John looked at me with tears forming in his eyes and said, “Mommy, Curry hit me for no reason.”

Winnie, age six, who was listening from a distance, piped in with this one liner.

“Oh Mommy. (Pause for effect.) There is **always** . . . a reason.”

Just typing that sentence makes me burst out laughing! After composing myself, the **truth** of her statement settled in. Yes, there is **always** a reason.

God is leading us for a reason, too. While we may not always see it, we must **remember** that we are asking God to OPEN our eyes to see the wonderful truths in His instructions.

LEAD ME

Look up the following verses and write down where God is leading. What is our role?
I'll start us off.

• Psalm 27:11

"Teach me how to live, O LORD. Lead me along the path of honesty, for my enemies are waiting for me to fall." Psalm 27:11 (NLT)

God is leading us on a straight path. The New Living Translation says that God is leading (us) along the path of honesty. Our part is to have a **teachable heart** and **follow God's leading**. Honesty is always the best policy even when it's easier to cover up the truth. This verse also reveals that there are enemies waiting for Christians to fall. Follow God's lead and you will not stumble.

Where is God leading?/ What is our Role?

• Psalm 61:1-2

_____	/	_____
_____	/	_____
_____	/	_____

• Psalm 23:1-4

_____	/	_____
_____	/	_____
_____	/	_____

• Psalm 139:23-24

_____	/	_____
_____	/	_____
_____	/	_____
_____	/	_____

• Exodus 15:13

_____	/	_____
_____	/	_____
_____	/	_____

God leads. Our job is to ask, to call, to cry, to remember, to search, and to try. **This is our part**. We have to do our work. We cannot expect God to wave a wand and place us on the yellow brick road. Life is certain to have its share of lions, tigers, and bears. But we have a guide, a teacher, and a loving Father who will protect us along the way. When our hearts grow faint, He is there. When we are overwhelmed, He will lead us to the rock of safety. When we are anxious, He will lead us. He is **all** we need. He renews our strength and leads us into **everlasting**.

Read Ecclesiastes 3:11. What is PLANTED in our hearts? _____

"He has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end." Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NLT)

Yes! **Eternity**. Last time I looked, that meant forever. Just as an acorn has the DNA to grow into a beautiful oak tree, we, too, have eternity planted in our hearts. Whether we acknowledge it or not, there is an emptiness in us that ONLY God can fill. We long for this relationship.

Whether we have been walking with God for five months, five years, or 50 years, we **all** have a longing to be closer to our Creator.

Scripture does not say that God has planted power, position, or even prosperity in our hearts. No. Our Creator, who made us His masterpiece, has planted **eternity** into our hearts. The seed of everlasting life is planted in our souls. Belief in Jesus activates the seed and inflames the passion to stoke the fire within us. Life here and now will never satisfy our deep inner longings because we were not made to live on a temporal earth. We were made to live in an eternal heaven. John 3:16 talks about this.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have **eternal life**.”

The gift of eternity is written all over Scripture. I hope this will be a fun exercise for you as we continue to learn where God is leading us in **preparation for takeoff** each morning.

Read the following verses. What do you learn about eternal life? What personal choices lead you there?

• **John 17:1-5**

“When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, ‘Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give **eternal life** to all whom you have given him. And this is **eternal life**, that they **know you** the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.’” John 17:1-5 (ESV)

• **John 5:24**

• **Romans 6:22-23**

• **Matthew 6:19-21**

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Matthew 6:19-21

LEAD ME

Matthew 6:19-21 calls us to store up treasures in heaven. What is the difference between an earthly treasure and a heavenly one? I am quite confident God is not talking about the American dream: How many cars we have, how big our house is, where our kids go to school, and if we have a latte machine. I love the bumper sticker that reads: "You can't take a U-Haul to heaven!" God treasures open hearts and open hands. When we follow Him to serve the poor, help those in need, give up worry, smile with thankful hearts, obey His teachings, live with humility, love unconditionally, hope expectantly, and believe confidently . . . we are storing up treasures in heaven! James tells us that one of the treasures is patiently enduring testing and temptations (James 1:12). If we are leaning into the leading of God and allowing Him to steer our tandem bike into everlasting life, then we are storing up treasures in heaven.

Eternity is our final destination.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. At the very bottom, there is a decorative green border featuring stylized, rounded shapes resembling grass or foliage. The overall appearance is that of a clean, unused piece of stationery or a notebook page.

LECTURE: Week One/TIME FOR TAKEOFF

This week, we learned the basics of Riding Tandem. We learned to take the lead from the Captain and lean into His leading each day. **T-i-m-e for Takeoff** is about taking the T-I-M-E to get to **know** our Captain, surrendering the front seat, and trusting Him.

We will learn **THREE** things about our Captain today.

1. God will _____ us for every good work.
2. We are His good work created in _____ for good works.
3. When He begins a good work, He _____ a good work.

Riding Tandem is not about a religion. It's about a _____.

1. God will **EQUIP** us for every good work.

- Our works are directly connected to our _____.
- To identify our work, we have to identify our _____.

2. We are His good work created in Christ for good works.

- To prepare means: to make ready, to make beforehand in mind and _____.

3. When God creates a good work, He will complete the good work.

- To carry on means: to accomplish, to finish, to execute, to complete
- Christ will _____ us.

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Answers: equip, Christ Jesus, finishes, relationship, gifts, passions, purpose, complete