

WHYZMEN • PARTICIPANT GUIDE • SESSION 9

The Ground Beneath Me & Harvest the First Half

Who wired you — and what was prepared

Bring this morning: your Workbook with the Board (five rows filled), your Naming the Gift page, and your Harvest Charter Part One — §1.0 to §1.3, in whatever state it is in. The writing happens on these pages and in the Charter.

Monday, January 18, 2027 (MLK Day) • 9:00–10:30 AM • New Community Church

“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

Ephesians 2:10 — Poima. The wiring was prepared, and so was the work. Neither one was self-assigned.

This Morning

	Movement	Minutes	What you leave with
1	Named by the Body	35	The sixth row of your Board — in other men’s words, with evidence
2	The Ground	14	One honest sentence about where your faith is resting this season
3	The Harvest	25	Part One read whole, and three lines: your Threshold (§1.0)
4	The Close	10	One practice for the week; next Monday, the Wilderness packet

Last Monday you named what you are wired to do. This morning we ask who wired you — and what He assigned. Then you read everything you have written since November as one document and say what it adds up to. We open at your tables with one moment from each man with last week’s practice, The Barnabas Turn.

1 Named by the Body

35 minutes • tables of four • 8 minutes per man

Your Board has five rows you filled from readings of yourself. The sixth is the one row you cannot fill in alone. It does not come from an assessment. It comes from what God assigned and what these men have seen — and gifts are given for the common good, so the common good gets a vote.

“Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.” — 1 Corinthians 12:7

How it runs at your table

- **He reads (90 seconds).** His nomination from the Naming the Gift page — “I suspect I have been given ___ because ___” — and one instance. No defence.
- **The witnesses name (5 minutes).** One at a time. One gift each. One instance each — “I saw you ___ when ___.” Especially the gift he did not nominate.
- **He writes (90 seconds).** Their words, not his translation. Then the next man.

The rule: evidence, not admiration. Where and Who, never Why. No advice. If three men name something you did not nominate, the homework did not fail — that is the exercise working.

THE ELEVEN WORDS • ROMANS 12 • 1 PETER 4

Gift	What it looks like
Teaching	Making a complicated thing clear to someone who needs it
Encouragement	Coming alongside a man who is about to quit
Truth-telling	Saying the true thing when it costs you something
Leadership	Seeing where a group needs to go, and taking them there
Administration	Turning a good intention into a plan that actually runs
Serving	Seeing what needs doing and doing it without being asked
Mercy	Sitting with suffering without needing to fix it
Giving	Releasing resources freely, usually without telling anyone
Hospitality	Making a stranger feel expected rather than tolerated
Shepherding	Staying with people over years, not projects
Faithfulness	Being the one who is still there in year eleven

What they named in me

Their words, not your translation. One line per witness: the gift, and the instance they attached.

Witness one — the gift, and when he saw it

Witness two

Witness three

Row six — Commission

Two or three gifts, in the witnesses' words, with an instance beside each. Copy this row onto the Board in your Workbook, and write it into the gifts line of Charter §1.3 this week.

What this body has seen God give me

Where the sixth row echoes a row already on the page

2 The Ground

14 minutes • where your faith is actually resting this season

“The task of the first half of life is to build a strong container. The task of the second half is to find what the container was for.” — Richard Rohr, Falling Upward

Your faith has a first half too. The faith that carried the building years was a faith of doing — praying for outcomes, believing God for provision, thanking Him for results. It worked because it fit the season. It is not wrong. It is seasonal. The second half asks faith to carry loads it was never asked to carry before.

“You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.” — Augustine, Confessions, Book 1

Philosophy can examine a life. Only God can give it rest.

First-half faith carried...	Second-half faith is asked to carry...
Petition and intercession for outcomes	Surrender to outcomes not prayed for and not preferred
Identity rooted in productive service	Identity rooted in being a beloved son, regardless of output
Certainty: God is guiding, blessing, directing	Presence: God is here even in silence, confusion, and loss
Scripture as instruction manual	Scripture as living presence — read slowly, not just studied
Faithfulness measured by moral performance	Faithfulness measured by depth of trust
Death as a problem to be managed	Death as the final act of faith — the trust fall into God's hands

First-half faith asks God to bless what I am building. Second-half faith asks what God is building — and offers itself as material.

“But I have calmed and quieted myself, I am like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child I am content.” — Psalm 131:2

A nursing child comes to get something. A weaned child comes to be held.

Be Still, and Know. Faith is particular too: not faith in general, but this stillness; not God somewhere else, but this room, this silence; not someday, but this season.

“Be still, and know that I am God.” — Psalm 46:10. The Hebrew means let go, release: the weaned child held, not the nursing child grasping.

Where my faith is resting

Three minutes, silent. Not where it should be — where it is. One honest sentence is enough, and “I don’t know” is an honest sentence. If your faith sounds smaller than it used to, that is very often not a crisis of faith but the evidence of one maturing. Your faith foundation is not where you started. It is where you are being written.

Where is my faith actually resting this season?

Charter §1.4 — My Faith Foundation — is written in the Wilderness Between. Two or three paragraphs, 300–400 words together: your faith journey (how it has developed, deepened, changed shape), and calling in this season (not what you have done for God, but what you sense Him inviting you into now). Two or three anchor scriptures. If a sentence comes out the way you would have said it in Sunday school, ask yourself: what part of that holds my weight now that didn’t at 40? Write it in the Wilderness Between (January 26 – February 14), with My Next Chapter; Session 10 hands out the packet. The reference essay “Why the Second Half Needs Its Own Faith” is in the Reader’s Companion.

3

The Harvest

25 minutes • read Part One whole • write the Threshold

You have been writing Part One since November. This morning you read it as one document — with the Board finished beside it — and say in three lines what it adds up to. Harvest the first half. Then pack for the climb.

Step one — read it whole (10 minutes, silent)

Do not edit. Do not fix a sentence. Read from the top the way you would read a long letter from a man you know well, and notice what keeps coming up. If something surprises you, put a small mark in the margin. What you are reading is not a set of exercises. It is the first half of a man, gathered in one place for the first time. Read it as his witness, not his editor. No Part One with you? Read your Board six times, slowly. It is enough.

Section	
1.0 My Threshold	Four lines from Session 2 — read them first
1.1 My Story	The Three Markers, Origins and Building Years
1.2 My Compass	Workview, Lifeview, Life Theme, your two Core Values
1.3 Strengths & Gifts	The Board, the Signature, the Caring Shift line
1.4 My Faith Foundation	The sentence you wrote twenty minutes ago. The rest is written in the Wilderness Between.
Appendix B • My Forgotten Range	Optional. Only if you wrote it.

What kept coming up

The Threshold — Harvest Charter §1.0

Ten minutes. Three lines, one sentence each. Look at the four lines you wrote in Session 2 first — then write these fresh. What changed between November and January is the point.

What I am leaving behind is ... (specific — a thing, a role, a habit, a grip)

What I am carrying forward is ... (present tense — from the page you just read: a value, a verb, a gift the body named)

What will be true in five years is ... (one sentence a man could check)

Around the table: read your “carrying forward” line. Only that line. Nobody responds. Let it sit in the room.

“The purposes of a person’s heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out.” — Proverbs 20:5

A line I heard at my table that I want to remember

4

This Week

Before Session 10 • one practice • about 5 minutes

You have harvested the first half. This week is light on purpose: one practice, nothing to read, nothing to write. Next Monday you get the Wilderness packet.

Item	What	What you do this week
Required	Three Good Things, aloud • Toolkit 4 • At Home	This week, tell her (or someone) one good thing from today and how it came about. Tick the box below; bring one moment to Session 10. About 5 minutes all week.
Optional	Going Deeper	The readings below — only if they call to you. Not counted.
Next Monday	The Wilderness packet	Session 10 hands out the three weeks and their due date. Nothing in it starts this week.

About 10 minutes this week: the practice, and row six into §1.3. The Harvest was the work.

Your Session 8 test action is strongly suggested in Wilderness Week 3, before Session 11.

Next Monday — Session 10

The Fellowship Gap & Finding Your Circle. You have harvested the first half alone. Next Monday we find the men who will carry it with you.

Practice of the Week • Before Session 10: Three Good Things, aloud

How: Tell her (or someone) one good thing from today and how it came about.

From the Toolkit: 4 • At Home

Rooted in: Martin Seligman

Tried it this week ☐ • Bring one moment to the room.

Readings for This Week

Required: Nothing required. The Harvest was the work.

BOOKS • ANY TIME, PICK ONE

- Richard Rohr, *Falling Upward* — Part Two, if you did not read it over the fall.
- Os Guinness, *The Call* — calling as a sustained posture, not an event.
- Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart* — the introduction.
- Bob Buford, *Halftime*, chapters 1–3.
- Augustine, *Confessions*, Book 1 — the source of this morning's restless heart; the whole book is written as a prayer to God, not an argument about Him.

SHORTER READINGS • WHYZMEN, IN YOUR FOLDER

- “Why the Second Half Needs Its Own Faith” — the reference essay behind this morning: Rohr’s two halves, Psalm 131, Paul’s arc from Damascus to Philipians 4:11, and the three threads of a second-half faith. About 15 minutes.
- Poiema: God’s Poem Still Being Written — the Ephesians 2:10 study note. About 8 minutes.
- Life Lessons Harvest Worksheet — Charter Appendix A: an exercise rather than a reading, and optional.
- Jubilee Backgrounder — one page on rest, release, return and gift: the theology beneath the sun in the picture. About 3 minutes.

WISDOM ACROSS TRADITIONS • FROM SESSION 1

Every tradition below ends in a question. The roads are real, and they run out. Read it beside this morning’s work on what you actually believe.

Tradition	What it gives — and where it stops
Aristotle	Practical wisdom (<i>phronesis</i>) — wisdom applied to action. <i>But why do we act?</i>
Viktor Frankl	Logotherapy — “he who has a why can bear almost any how.” <i>But how do we bear it?</i>
Buford's Halftime	Core (who I am) + Capacity (what I can do) + Context (where I'm called). <i>But how do I choose?</i>
Erik Erikson	Generativity — the drive to invest in the next generation. <i>But how do I formulate my wisdom to give?</i>
The Stoics	Virtue is the only good — but they seek detachment; we seek transformation, not just knowledge.
Socrates	The unexamined life is not worth living. <i>But what is the result of the examination?</i>
Jesus	Biblical wisdom begins where self-sufficiency ends — in the fear of the LORD, the surrender of the heart.

Same map of the human condition. **Different magnetic north.**

May you go this week aware of the ground beneath you. May you trust the poem still being written. May what you carry forward shape what you become.

Wise Men Still Seek, Knowing Their Why's

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