

The Wilderness Between

Break Reference • January 26 – February 14 • Back together Monday, February 15 (Presidents' Day)

You have harvested the first half and found your circle. On January 25 you chose two men on purpose. The next three weeks are not a pause in the program. They are the part of it that needs time to pass. What is required is light: your triad meets once, and you write two Charter pages. Everything else in here is optional. Read it once, then do it.

THE REQUIRED LIST • ABOUT 210 MINUTES OVER THREE WEEKS

- 1. Your triad meets once**, in Week 2, February 2 – 8: ninety minutes, run from your T1 • Your Triad card. The date is already in your phone.
 - 2. Two Charter pages get written**, in Week 3: §2.0 My Next Chapter, a page, and §1.4 My Faith Foundation, two or three paragraphs, 300–400 words.
- Due Sunday, February 14:** §2.0 and §1.4. Bring the Charter open to both on February 15.

SKIM IT IN WEEK 1 • PRACTISE IN WEEK 2 • CLEARNESS MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22

Skim it now. Ten minutes, start to finish, in Week 1 (January 26 – February 1).

Practise in Week 2. Your first triad meeting is the rehearsal: the one rule read aloud, one man at a time, a pause before anyone answers, listening before fixing. *Do not bring your mission to this meeting.*

Then, two Mondays after the break: Clearness Monday, February 22. No class; your triad runs the Clearness Room in its own room at church. Session 11 on February 15 shows you how and hands you card T3.

What is in this reference

§	WHAT IT IS	WHEN YOU USE IT	PAGE
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3.2	Triad Log: what each man said he would do	Every meeting, from now on	9

Already in your binder: bring these too

CARD	WHERE AND WHAT
T1 • Your Triad	Your card from Session 10. The one rule, the first meeting's run, the twelve monthly questions. The rule book for Week 2. More in Toolkit 5 • Build & Host.
E1 • The Great Listener Card	From Session 4, with Listening vs Fixing on the back. Bring it with T1.

"Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken."
Ecclesiastes 4:12

Three Weeks, One Box at a Time

Required: your triad meets once, and §2.0 and §1.4 get written • about 210 minutes

Every week

- **One call a week.** The Practice of the Week for the break (6 • Take Stock): call a man you have not heard from, and ask the second question. On your card: Tried it ✓ and one moment, each week.
- **Optional, not counted:** Three Good Things in the evening (2.1), and the What I Am Bringing Back page (2.2).

Week 1 • Rest *January 26 – February 1 • about 10 minutes*

☐	Answered your facilitator's one text: what are you grateful for from the fall?
☐	Sent one text to the man beyond this room, if you did not send it on January 25.
☐	Skimmed this reference once (10 minutes).
☐	One call: a man you have not heard from. Ask the second question.

Week 2 • First Triad Meeting *February 2 – 8 • about 90 minutes • see 3.1*

☐	Triad met: ninety minutes, run from your T1 card, the same place you will use all year. If the week will not work, meet earlier, in Week 1 — never later.
☐	Every man heard on the Month 1 question; nobody fixed anything.
☐	Triad charter finished: purpose, commitment, and the activity, with a date on it.
☐	Month two set: date, place, initiator, and the M2 question.
☐	One call this week: a man you have not heard from. Ask the second question.

Week 3 • Direction *February 9 – 14 • about 105 minutes*

☐	§2.0 My Next Chapter: Charter Part Two, opening page: the next chapter in a page, from your Session 8 Contribution Hypothesis (60).
☐	§1.4 My Faith Foundation: two or three paragraphs, 300–400 words: your journey, who you are in Christ, and what He is asking now (45).
☐	One call this week: a man you have not heard from.
☐	Sunday, February 14: §2.0 and §1.4 done.

Bring to Session 11 • Monday, February 15 (Presidents' Day)

- **Your Charter,** open to §2.0 and §1.4.
- **Your first triad meeting,** in one sentence.
- **One moment** from One call a week, and the Seven Ways to Coast card from your envelope.

Optional, only if it calls to you, not counted: your ten one-line Domain Why's (Charter Appendices) • reread Part One whole and mark what changed • your Session 8 test action, one try (Session 11 asks what it found out, if you tried it) • Three Good Things (2.1) and What I Am Bringing Back (2.2) • at home: introduce your triad to your wife; the ten-minute talk with H1 • Going Deeper: Dunbar, Friends; Velloso, We Should Get Together; Brooks, How to Know a Person.

Three Good Things

Three minutes an evening • optional • January 26 – February 14

Not the Thanksgiving round-the-table, and not looking on the bright side: honest recognition of what you have been given, sitting alongside grief rather than replacing it. Optional through the break: offered, not assigned. *“Enter his gates with thanksgiving” (Psalm 100:4).*

Start here

- **Pick your spot tonight, before you forget.** Put this page where you will see it at the end of the day: the nightstand, the counter by the coffee maker, the arm of your reading chair. A guide in a drawer is a guide you will not use.
- **Attach it to something you already do.** New habits fail on their own and survive when they ride along with an existing one: after you brush your teeth, after the last dish is put away, after you set the alarm.
- **Write three things. Ask why each one matters.** For each: why does this matter, and what does it reveal? Not three miracles. Three things you noticed. A good cup of coffee counts. Your son called. Size is not the point; noticing is.

After I _____, I will write my three.

WHAT A REAL ENTRY LOOKS LIKE

“My daughter called just to check on me. It matters because I did not have to ask, which means she thinks of me on her own.”

“Good coffee on the porch before anyone else was up. It matters because I skipped that fifteen minutes for twenty years.”

“Doug texted back within a minute. It matters because I am learning what it is like to have men who answer.”

Three things worth knowing

- **You will miss days. Plan on it.** Miss two, pick it up on the third. The point is accumulation, not a perfect streak. The first missed evening is where most men quit, so decide now that it will not be.
- **Some evenings nothing will come.** Especially in a hard week or on a hard anniversary. Go smaller rather than skipping. You woke up. There was food. Someone's name came to mind. A thin entry beats a blank page.
- **Grief and gratitude sit together.** If the season includes an empty chair, gratitude does not ask you to pretend otherwise. You can write “I miss him” and “I am grateful I had him” on the same line. Both are true. That is the whole practice.

This week's nudge

WEEK	NUDGE
Week 1 Jan 26 – Feb 1	Just get the habit started. Small and ordinary is exactly right. If you write “coffee” four nights running, you are doing it correctly.
Week 2 Feb 2 – 8	Your triad meets this week. Watch for people: name one by name each evening, and say why that particular person.
Week 3 Feb 9 – 14	Look forward. What are you grateful for that has not happened yet: the spring ahead, the men in your triad, the freedom you now have? Mark the one entry you will bring on February 15.

My three weeks

	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	ONE CALL ✓
Wk 1 • Jan 26	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Wk 2 • Feb 2	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Wk 3 • Feb 9	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

What I Am Bringing Back

Read back through your three weeks. Then answer these.

You will not be asked to read your pages aloud or hand them in. They are yours. If you kept them, come with one thing: one entry, one pattern, one moment you would not have registered a month earlier. That is where the Mission conversation begins.

MY PRACTICE	
Where I keep this page	
My anchor: after I...	
The evening I started	

One thing I noticed that surprised me

A pattern I saw: what kept showing up

One person I want to thank, and for what

What this makes me want to do with the second half

If you kept it, bring this page to Session 11, Mission & True North • Monday, February 15, 2027

Going Further with Gratitude

For when Three Good Things wants company. One new practice at a time.

Why it works

- **The mechanism.** The practice trains your brain to *look* for what is good, not just for problems. Your brain finds what it is searching for. Expect it to feel awkward at first; that is normal.
- **What men tend to notice.** After about three weeks: shifts in mood and resilience. After about two months: stronger relationships and a clearer perspective. After about six months: gratitude becomes a default way of seeing.
- **The theology.** Gratitude is recognition that your life is gift. Not earned. Given. Recognizing that aligns you with reality as it actually is.
- **When you don't feel it.** Gratitude is not a feeling you wait for. It is a practice you choose. Practise it without strong emotion; the feeling follows.
- **"This feels cheesy."** It might, at first. It works anyway. **"I don't have time."** Three Good Things takes three minutes; the Gratitude Pause, thirty seconds.

Other practices to add, one at a time

PRACTICE	HOW	WHY IT WORKS
Gratitude Pause Three times a day • 30 seconds	Morning, midday, evening: stop, name one thing you are grateful for, and <i>feel</i> it, not just think it. "I'm grateful for my friend's text and knowing I'm thought of."	Interrupts rumination. Reminds you grace is present throughout the day.
Gratitude Letter Once a week	Write to someone who shaped you. Be specific: what did they do, and how did it matter? Optional: send it, or read it aloud to them.	Deepens the relationship, changes how you see the person, and often opens new conversations.
Weekly Reflection 15 – 30 minutes	Who made a difference this week, and how? What did I learn? What patterns do I notice in what I appreciate? How does this reflect my values?	Connects gratitude to what matters to you, which is where calling shows itself.
Gratitude with Others Weekly	With your wife, your triad, or a friend: "Here's what I'm grateful for this week..." and "Here's what I appreciate about you..."	Said aloud to another person, gratitude deepens the bond and amplifies the benefit.
Seasonal Review Quarterly, and at year-end	Each quarter, name five to ten people or experiences you are grateful for. At year-end (not just the holiday), name who mattered most, the challenges that taught you, and your intentions for the year ahead.	Shows the longer pattern single evenings cannot, and gathers the harvest before the next season.

Gratitude and your calling

Gratitude for your **gifts** leads to recognizing they are meant to be used. For your **relationships**, to understanding that your life affects others. For your **challenges**, to insight into your resilience and growth. For your **time**, to clarity on what actually matters. *Calling emerges from stewardship, not entitlement.*

Deeper reading, if you want it

Robert Emmons, *Thanks!* Readable research on gratitude practices. • **Ann Voskamp, *One Thousand Gifts*.** Gratitude as a spiritual discipline. • **Brené Brown, *Daring Greatly*.** Gratitude as part of wholehearted living. • **Richard Rohr, *Everything Belongs*.** Gratitude for both light and shadow.

Your First Triad Meeting

Ninety minutes, an easy question, one rule: listen before fixing • the same run as the back of your T1 card

Date		Time	
Place		Initiator	

CLOCK	WHAT HAPPENS	WHO HOLDS IT
0:00 – 0:10	Arrive and settle over food or coffee. Phones face down. The timekeeper reads the one rule from your T1 card aloud. You are practising the room's manners on an easy morning.	The initiator: the man who booked the table
0:10 – 1:10	The Month 1 question: “What's one thing going well in your life right now?” Twenty minutes a man (fifteen in a triad of four). He talks; nobody breaks in. When he stops, let ten seconds of silence sit. Then each listener says one thing he heard, not one thing he thinks. No advice unless he asks.	Rotate: the man on the speaker's left keeps time
1:10 – 1:25	Finish the triad charter: purpose, commitment, anything left blank on January 25. Pick the activity and put a date on it.	Whoever has the Participant Guide open
1:25 – 1:30	Set month two: date, place, initiator, and the M2 question: “What's one thing you're working hard at that others might not see?” Close the same way every time: a prayer, a toast, a line. The ritual is what makes three friendships a group.	Next month's initiator

YOUR JOB IN THE TRIAD

Not to know what your brother should do. To be the man who asks what he did, and means it.

Cornell psychologist Anthony Burrow studies GripTape, a program that pairs each young learner with an adult “champion” who is not allowed to be an expert in what the learner is learning. The champion only checks in and asks two questions: What did you do this week? What did we learn? That alone measurably moved purpose, curiosity and wellbeing. Notice the we: the champion learns alongside him; he does not grade him.

The role rotates. When one man has the floor, the other two are his champions; twenty minutes later another man has it. Nobody in the triad is permanently the wise one. **Every man in your triad is qualified for this job on day one.**

From month two: open each man's turn the same way

#	THE QUESTION
1	What did you do since we last met? A question about facts. He can always answer it, even “nothing,” which is the start of a useful conversation.
2	What did we learn? Say we. You are enlisting yourself in his learning, not grading it.
3	What do you want to do next? Not “what should you do”: that is the fixer, wearing a question mark.

Then the month's question. Write what each man says he will do in the Triad Log (3.2), so the first question has something to ask about.

Triad Log

So the first question at the next meeting has something to ask about

At the end of each man's turn, write down, in his words, the one thing he said he would do before you meet again. Next time, open his turn with it: What did you do? What did we learn? Tick the box when you have asked.

DATE	BROTHER	WHAT HE SAID HE WOULD DO, IN HIS WORDS	ASKED
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"Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak." James 1:19

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